LEADERSHIP MATTERS
BENCHMARKING WOMEN IN BUSINESS LEADERSHIP IN THE PACIFIC

PSDI | THE PACIFIC
PRIVATE SECTOR
DEVELOPMENT
INITIATIVE

SEPTEMBER 2021

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ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	—	Asian Development Bank
ASX	—	Australian Securities Exchange
CEDAW	—	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
CEO	—	chief executive officer
CFO	—	chief financial officer
COO	—	chief operating officer
COVID-19	—	coronavirus disease 2019
DMC	—	developing member country
FSM	—	Federated States of Micronesia
FTSE	—	Financial Times Stock Exchange
GDP	—	gross domestic product
ILO	—	International Labour Organization
MP	—	Member of Parliament
MSME	—	micro, small, and medium enterprises
NSO	—	National Statistics Office
PACWIP	—	Pacific Women in Politics
PIFS	—	Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
PNG	—	Papua New Guinea
PSDI	—	Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative
SPTO	—	Pacific Tourism Organisation
SPX	—	South Pacific Stock Exchange (Fiji)
SOE	—	state-owned enterprise
UK	—	United Kingdom
US	—	United States
UN	—	United Nations

CURRENCIES AND EXCHANGE RATES

Currencies and exchange rates to the United States dollar (annual average)

	Currency	Symbol	Exchange Rate				
			2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Australia	dollar/s	A$	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.4
Cook Islands	New Zealand dollar/s	NZ$	1.5	1.4	1.4	1.5	1.6
Fiji	Fiji dollar/s	F$	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.2	2.2
Papua New Guinea	kina	K	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.5
Samoa	tala	ST	2.6	2.5	2.6	2.6	2.7
Solomon Islands	Solomon Islands dollar	SI$	7.9	7.9	8.0	8.2	8.2
Tonga	pa'anga	T$	2.2	2.2	2.3	2.5	2.3

Source: Asian Development Bank. 2021. *Asian Development Outlook 2021: Financing a Green and Inclusive Recovery*. Manila.

KEY DEFINITIONS

This report presents data on a range of categories that have different titles in different countries and organizations. The list below provides a definition of the various categories used in the report and the alternative titles that are used in some countries and/or organizations:

Board: a group of individuals responsible for the governance, management, and strategic direction of an organization. Also referred to as board of directors.

Board chair: the leader of the board of directors charged with keeping the organization focused on its mission, vision, and strategic direction. This category includes both elected and appointed chairs under a range of titles including chairman, chairperson, and president.

Deputy chair: the second in charge of the board of directors. This position does not exist in all organizations and boards in the sample. It includes titles such as vice chairman/person, vice president, and deputy.

Director: a member of the board that oversees the affairs of a business. This category includes all other board members including secretary and includes titles such as board member and governing council member. Directors can be appointed or elected. They can be remunerated or act in a voluntary capacity.

Chief executive officer (CEO): the highest-ranking person in a company or other institution responsible for making managerial decisions. This person is typically an employee of the organization. This category includes titles such as general manager, managing director, and executive director.

Chief financial officer (CFO) and/or chief operating officer (COO): this category includes the senior most position in the finance and/or operations of the organization. This category includes titles such as company accountant. If both positions exist within a given organization, the data refer to the CFO with the COO counted under "all senior management personnel."

All senior management personnel: this category includes executive leadership (CEOs, CFOs, COOs, and equivalent) and all staff designated manager, department head, or equivalent. . Data in this category may not reflect the full management team for each individual organization as it does not include vacant positions or positions for which no sex-disaggregated data was available.

Industry association: an organization that supports businesses and employers in a particular sector and/or industry. This category includes chambers of commerce as well as sector-specific organizations in sectors such as manufacturing, resources, and tourism.

Publicly listed company: a company whose ownership is organized via shares of stock that are intended to be freely traded on a stock exchange. Only Fiji and Papua New Guinea have a stock exchange, and therefore, publicly listed companies.

State-owned enterprise: a corporatized enterprise that is majority government owned and operates with a commercial mandate. The names of these entities vary between countries and include public enterprises and public trading bodies.

Regional private sector organization: this category includes regional organizations with a private sector and/or industry/sectoral mandate such as regional associations for utilities and regional industry associations.

Other private sector organization: this category includes all other businesses in the sample including regulatory institutions, such as central banks, retirement funds, and non-listed companies.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Women are grossly underrepresented in business leadership globally. The lack of women in leadership roles negatively impacts company performance, productivity, and profitability which, in turn, constrains private sector development and economic growth. Greater gender diversity in leadership delivers commercial benefits for companies through a better mix of leadership skills, wider pool of talent, a better reflection of consumers and improved corporate governance. Despite the well-documented benefits, women hold, on average, just 16.9% of board seats, 5.3% of board chair positions, and 4.4% of chief executive officer (CEO) positions globally.

For women in the Pacific, gaining access to leadership positions can be particularly challenging. The region is characterized by small private sectors, significant gender disparities in overall labor force participation and cultural traditions that value men's leadership abilities. The region's extremely low representation of women in politics combined with social norms that can discriminate against women have led many to conclude that the Pacific is a region where women have limited opportunity to take on leadership and decision-making roles.

Leadership Matters: Benchmarking Women's Business Leadership in the Pacific examines women's leadership beyond the political sphere, focusing on business and the private sector. The study collects and analyzes women's business leadership data across the 14 Pacific developing member countries (DMCs) of the Asian Development Bank. It establishes a baseline for women's representation in senior business leadership and compares its findings against the global averages and the rate of women's political leadership in the Pacific. The report aims to provide data and guidance for private sector businesses and organizations, civil society, development partners, and governments to develop and implement evidence-based policy and practices to increase women's leadership in business and, ultimately, women's leadership in all aspects of society.

The study includes available data on the composition of boards and/or senior management of 274 organizations, across five categories— industry associations, publicly listed companies (PLCs), regional private sector organizations, other private sector organizations, such as retirement funds, non-listed companies, and state-owned enterprises (SOEs).[1] The study sample does not include multinational organizations with global boards, family-owned businesses or business activity in the informal sector as the primary purpose is to document the extent of local leadership opportunities in the formal sector. Data was collected primarily through a desk-based review of publicly available information. Data are presented regionally and by country, and broken down by economic sector, organization type, and the different types of leadership.

The study's findings suggest that the business community in the Pacific offers greater opportunities for women to take on leadership roles than the political sphere. According to the data collected, the proportion of women as board directors in the Pacific is higher than women members of Parliament (MPs) in 13 of 14 DMCs, while the proportion of women CEOs is higher than women MPs in 10.

Women's representation in business leadership in the Pacific also compares favorably with global averages. In the Pacific, on average, women hold 21% of board seats, 11% of board chair positions, and 19% of deputy board chair roles. In senior management, women comprise 13% of CEOs and 34% of chief financial officers and/or chief operating officers. 27% of all Pacific boards have more than 30% women directors, and of those, 11% have at least equal numbers of men and women directors. However, more than 30% of all boards in the sample have no women directors and a further 41% have fewer than 30% women directors.

The proportion of women in leadership roles varies considerably by country, organization type, and sector. The Cook Islands, Palau, Samoa, and Tuvalu stand out as having higher proportions of women directors and CEOs than most countries in the region. Among the sample's five categories of organization type, industry associations, such as chambers of commerce, have the highest average representation of women. In industry associations, women comprise 26% of board chairs, 50% of deputy chairs, 35% of directors, and 53% of CEOs. By sector, tourism is the only sector to exceed the Pacific regional average in every category of leadership, with women comprising 18% of board chairs, 60% of deputy chairs, 28% of directors, and 50% of CEOs.

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1   Government-owned and controlled, state-owned enterprises are included in the study as they are amongst the largest commercial entities in most Pacific countries and for their importance as employers. Similarly, regulatory bodies, such as central banks are included because of their significant role in setting the frameworks for business.

SOEs comprise a significant proportion of the sample,[2] so it is concerning that their average proportion of women as directors and CEOs is lower than most other organization types. Additionally, little progress has been made by SOEs to increase women's representation on their boards in almost a decade. A 2012 Pacific Island Forum Secretariat study found that women held just 18.5% (96 out of 518) of SOE director positions and the Leadership Matters data show that women still hold just 18.0% (113 out of 627) of director positions. This stagnation is despite government commitments to increase leadership opportunities for women in these organizations.

The study has found that businesses can, and have, made rapid progress in promoting women's leadership. Alongside the data, the study presents 12 case studies which examine successful examples of individuals, businesses, governments, and civil society and other organizations working to promote women's leadership and success in business. A region-wide lack of reliable sex-disaggregated data makes it difficult to develop a comprehensive picture of the trends, drivers, and challenges in women's representation in business leadership over time. However, women are clearly still underrepresented in business leadership and progress will not occur without commitment and resourcing.

The study's recommendations target four key stakeholder groups—governments, private sector organizations and networks, businesses, and development partners/civil society organizations—to encourage and support women's business leadership. The recommendations are aimed at developing a better understanding of the structural barriers faced by women and ways to address them; establishing supportive policies, practices, and incentives; and monitoring women's representation in leadership over time. Further research is also recommended to examine specific issues in more depth, including country-specific constraints and opportunities and the experience of women pioneers in business leadership.

Although the study finds that the Pacific compares well with global averages for women's business leadership, these averages reflect ongoing global inequality. The ultimate goal must be equality in leadership in all countries and sectors. Continued efforts towards equal representation in leadership are critical, not only for gender equality but also to improve business performance, productivity, and profitability for continued economic recovery and growth.

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2   State-owned enterprises comprise 137 of 274 organizations where board and/or senior management data are available.

1. GLOBAL TRENDS IN WOMEN'S BUSINESS LEADERSHIP

The rationale for gender equality and greater workforce participation by women is clear—it helps reduce income inequality, increases economic diversification, and boosts economic growth (International Monetary Fund 2018). The World Economic Forum (2017) predicts that closing the global gender gap in labor market participation by 25% by 2025 would add $5.3 trillion to gross domestic product (GDP) globally.

A growing body of research tracks the correlation between greater gender diversity in leadership and company performance. The research shows that increasing the number of women in senior leadership positions encourages more women to enter and remain in the workforce—improving company performance and directly contributing to economic growth. A review of the global literature identifies several key trends and findings relevant to a study of women's business leadership in the Pacific:

1. **Companies with more women in leadership perform better.**

Increasing the number of women in leadership improves company performance, productivity, and profitability. Recent studies conducted in Australia and the United Kingdom (UK) quantify the increase in company value and profitability. An Australian study conducted in 2020 concluded that appointing a woman chief executive officer (CEO) increased the market value of the average Australian Stock Exchange (ASX) listed company by 5%, equivalent to A$79.6 million (Cassells and Duncan 2020).

A similar study in the UK found that Financial Times Stock Exchange (FTSE) 350 companies with executive committees comprising 33% or more women had a net profit margin 10 times greater than companies with no women at this level. Further, the study calculated that the UK economy and shareholders missed out on £47 million in potential profit that all companies on the exchange would have earned if they had performed at the same level as those with 33% or more women leaders (The Pipeline 2020).

A 2019 survey conducted by the International Labor Organization (ILO) of 13,000 enterprises across 70 countries found that 57.4% of companies agreed that gender diversity initiatives improved business outcomes, and 60.2% reported increased profits and productivity as a result. The study concluded that "when boardrooms are gender-balanced, enterprises are 20% more likely to have enhanced business outcomes." Further, companies with at least one women director are 20% less likely to experience bankruptcy (Wilson and Altanlar 2009).

Several reasons are identified for the improved company performance that comes from having greater gender diversity in leadership. These include a better mix of leadership skills; a wider pool of talent; better reflection of consumers; and improved corporate governance, such as more effective board room functioning and more balanced decision-making due to a wider range of perspectives (Credit Suisse Research Institute 2012). These differences deliver commercial benefits for companies. The causality between greater diversity and increased firm performance has been reaffirmed in recent studies through improvements in methodology and the quality of data available (University of Queensland Business School 2021).

2. **The number of women in both senior management and board positions is slowly increasing.**

The number of women appointed to senior executive positions and corporate boards has been slowly increasing globally. A 2020 study across 32 countries found that the global average proportion of women in senior management positions was 29%—an increase of 10% over 16 years. The report also found that women's representation in senior management varied across regions, from 27% in Asia and the Pacific to 38% in Africa (Grant Thornton 2020). However, even as women's overall representation in senior management grows, they remain overrepresented in support management functions such as finance, human resources, and administration. Meanwhile, men continue to dominate the more strategic management functions that typically lead to c-suite roles (CEOs, chief financial officers (CFOs), and chief operating officers), constraining women's ability to transition to these roles (International Labour Organization [ILO] 2019).

Data from 8,648 listed companies across 49 countries shows that in 2018, women held 16.9% of board seats globally, an increase of 1.9% from 2016 (Deloitte Global Centre for Corporate Governance [GCCG] 2019). But this varies significantly across countries and regions, with progress occurring most rapidly in Europe. Women hold the highest proportion of board seats in Norway (41%), France (37.2%), Sweden (33.3%), Finland (31.9%), and New Zealand (31.5%)

Box 1: Targets Boost Women's Representation on New Zealand's Public Sector Boards

In July 2021, the representation of women on state sector boards and committees in New Zealand reached 50.9% (Tinetti 2021). This result is an all-time high and represents the achievement of a target set by Government of New Zealand to have 50% representation of women on government boards and committees by 2021.

The Government of New Zealand appoints the thousands of members that comprise its 430 state sector boards and committees. The scale of these appointments illustrates the potential for the public sector to lead the way in ensuring diversity in leadership. In recognition of this potential, the 50% compulsory target was established in 2018. The target reflects the focus of New Zealand's Ministry for Women and Ministry for Ethnic Communities on "ensuring that boards "reflect and represent the communities they serve" (Government of New Zealand, Ministry for Women 2020). The achievement of the 50% target represents an uplift in the representation of women from 40.8% in 2004, the first year that the Ministry of Women performed its now-annual stocktake (Government of New Zealand, Ministry for Women 2020).

The Government of New Zealand takes proactive steps to support its achievement. The Ministry for Women runs a nominations service and maintains an active database of over 1,000 women available for nomination for board positions (Government of New Zealand, Ministry for Women 2021). The Ministry for Ethic Communities has entered partnerships with The Institute of Directors New Zealand and The Superdiversity Institute to train and support a growing pool of diverse directors (Govrnment of New Zealand, Ministry for Ethnic Communities 2021). The Ministry of Women works with a number of government departments that maintain their own databases of candidates, and with nongovernment organizations, to share information and encourage more representation of women on boards (Government of New Zealand, Ministry for Women). Additionally, independent organizations, such as Governance New Zealand, are doing significant work to increase the number of women on boards (Hawarden and Greenwood 2021).

The government also recognizes the critical importance of other dimensions of diversity. The 2020 stocktake included ethnic diversity for the first time. In 2019, 21.1% of board members were Maōri and 4.6% were of Pacific Island background (Pasifika) (Government of New Zealand, Ministry for Women 2020). Based on the new understanding of ethnic diversity on boards, a cross-government working group has been established to take a range of steps to increase ethnic diversity and diversity of background and build inclusive boards.

Despite achieving gender parity on state sector boards and committees, women are underrepresented in the private sector. Since the New Zealand Stock Exchange (NZX) introduced diversity reporting requirements in 2013 (Hawarden and Greenwood 2021), the proportion of women directors NZX listed companies has grown—from 8% in March 2013 (New Zealand Stock Exchange 2013) to 22.5% in 2020 (New Zealand Stock Exchange 2020)—but remains well below the parity achieved in the public sector. Additionally, almost one in five NZX-listed companies had no women on their boards in 2020 (Radio New Zealand 2020). Disparities between the public and private sector are also apparent in the proportion of organizations with formal policies, programs, or initiatives in place for diversity issues, including gender (Roy et al 2020).

Efforts to increase gender diversity on New Zealand's private sector boards continue. The Institute of Directors in New Zealand is working to increase board diversity including through its Mentoring for Diversity and Future Directors training programs, and the *Getting on board with diversity* guide.

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Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative.

(Deloitte GCCG 2019). Of the top five countries, two have enacted gender quota legislation (France, and Norway). The remaining three have adopted self-regulation and/or corporate governance code recommendations and, in the case of Finland, legislated quotas only for SOEs and government bodies (see Box 1, page 2 and Box 2, page 4).

3. Few women reach the highest levels of leadership as chief executive officers or board chairs

Despite encouraging progress, women remain underrepresented on corporate boards and in management positions. This underrepresentation is particularly notable at the highest levels of business leadership, such as in CEO and board chair positions. The global average in 2018 for women holding CEO positions was just 4.4% and 5.3% for board chair positions (Deloitte GCCG 2019).

Across both the Fortune 500 and the FTSE 100 combined, there are only 30 women board chairs even though women hold 22.5% and 29.0% respectively of board seats overall (Reese 2019). A backward trend in the appointment of women CEOs was observed in FTSE 100 companies—in 2020, there were just five women CEOs, down from six in 2019 (The Pipeline 2020). A 2020 study of 668 companies in Europe found that only 9% of board chairs were women and only 42 companies (6%) had a woman CEO (Kantar 2020).

Despite women entering the workforce in increasing numbers, the proportion of women drops as you look higher up the corporate ladder (Figure 1). The larger the company, the less likely there is to be a woman CEO (ILO 2019).

Several factors contribute to the lower representation of women as CEOs. These include the concentration of women in support management functions, outdated workplace cultures that lack supportive policies such as flexible work arrangements, director appointment processes, unconscious bias, and lack of sponsorship of women. Additionally, there is a strong correlation between the presence of women in senior leadership and a greater organizational focus on gender diversity—women CEOs are important drivers of gender diversity at senior levels (The Pipeline 2020).

The practice of filling board positions through existing board members' networks, rather than open recruitment, is a significant barrier to increasing women's representation on boards (Credit Suisse Research Institute 2012). Additionally, previous board experience is highly regarded in the director appointment process, limiting opportunities for first-time candidates. In Australia, between 2005 and 2020, 38.2% of all

Figure 1.1: Women in S&P 500 Companies

CEOS
5.8%

TOP EARNERS
11.0%

BOARD SEATS
21.2%

EXECUTIVE/SENIOR LEVEL OFFICIALS AND MANAGERS
26.5%

FIRST/MID LEVEL OFFICIALS AND MANAGERS
36.9%

TOTAL EMPLOYEES
44.7%
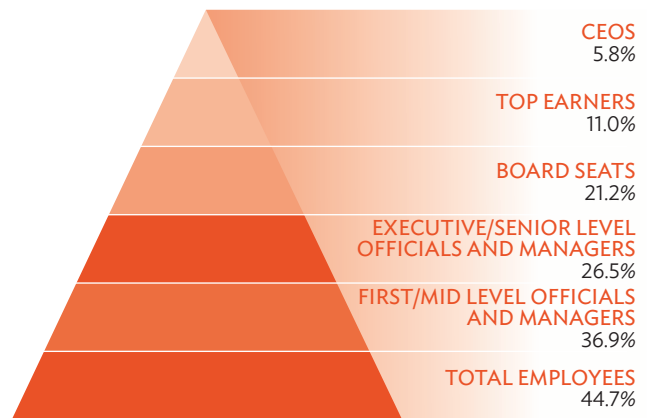
CEO = chief executive officer.
Source: Catalyst. 2020. *Pyramid: Women in S&P 500 Companies.* New York.

ASX 300 vacancies were filled by those already holding an ASX 300 board seat (Ownership Matters 2020). The trend was even more pronounced in the United States where, of 467 new board appointments in 2019, 72% had previously served on a board, 56% were men, 76% were Caucasian, and 71% were current or former CEOs or CFOs (Heidrick and Struggles 2020). The preference for candidates known to board members and who already have board experience is particularly limiting for women and has resulted in a phenomenon referred to as "golden skirts" (whereby the small pool of women that meet these criteria end up sitting on multiple boards) (Chartered Governance Institute 2021). The golden skirts phenomenon has been observed in 2012 on the boards of state-owned enterprises (SOEs) in the Pacific, where it was noted that 37% of women directors sit on multiple SOE boards (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat [PIFS] 2012).

4. The likelihood of a business having more women in leadership is determined by several factors.

1. Social norms/culture: Several studies noted that culture and social norms on gender roles are among the most critical determinants of gender diversity within organizations (Credit Suisse Research Institute 2012, ILO 2019, and Kanatar 2020). The International Labour Organization (2019) observes that this is because "corporate culture mirrors the traditions and social norms of [its] society."

2. Proportion of women at all levels: More women in the workforce means organizations are significantly more likely to have a woman CEO. Organizations where women comprise 30%–39% of the total workforce are almost

Box 2: Legislated Quotas Vs. Voluntary Targets– the Global Experience

While no mandatory, legislated quotas currently exist for public or private companies in the Pacific, several voluntary measures have been implemented. These include the updated listing rules for the South Pacific Stock Exchange (see Box 3, page 7), which require companies to report on gender diversity measures in annual reports. In addition, several countries are considering setting targets for women's representation on state-owned enterprise (SOE) boards. Papua New Guinea's SOE holding company, Kumul Consolidated Holdings, recently set a target of 30% representation of women in senior management and board director roles within the next 5 years (see Box 9, page 54). The global experience of implementing mandatory quotas and voluntary measures can serve as a useful guide for Pacific governments, regulators, and businesses that are considering strategies to increase women's representation in business leadership.

Figure 1: Introduction of Quotas for Representation of Women on Corporate Boards, Various Countries

1999
Israel
Quota: at least one woman on every board

2004
Norway
Quota: 40%

2010
Kenya
Quota: 33%
Iceland
Quota: 40%

2011
Belgium
Quota: 33%
Italy
Quota: 33%

2013
India
Quota: at least one woman on every board

2015
Germany
Quota: 30%

2017
France
Quota: 40%

2018
Austria
Quota: 30%
California (US)
Quota: At least two women on every board by 2021

2020
Switzerland
Quota: 30%
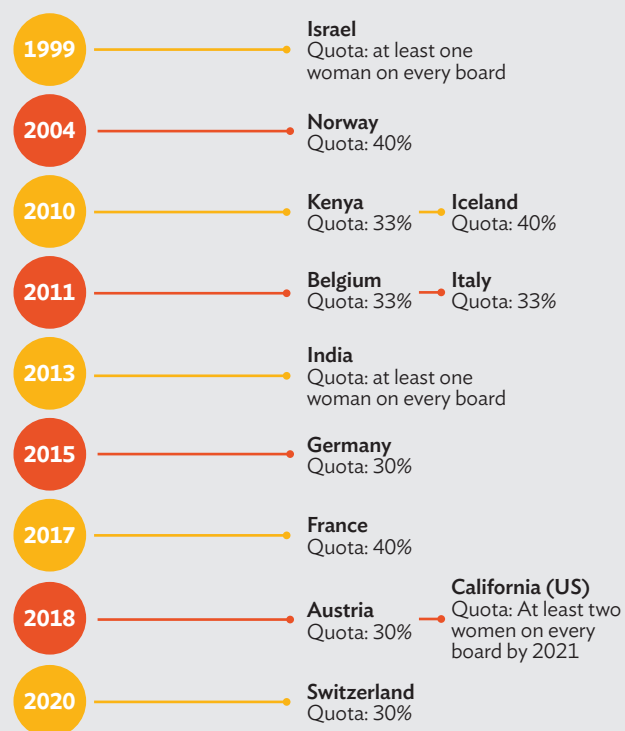
US = United States. Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative.

A growing number of countries have taken action to improve gender diversity on corporate boards and in senior management. Some countries have modified their legislative frameworks to introduce binding quotas, while others have adopted soft law, policy-based voluntary recommendations to increase the proportion of women appointed to board-level positions.

Legislative quotas that promote women's board representation are legal mechanisms that require companies to ensure that a specified proportion of boards are made up of women. Such quotas are often accompanied by sanctions to penalize non-compliance.

Several countries in Europe, as well as Kenya, Israel, India, and the state of California, have enacted quota laws to increase the number of women on corporate boards (Figure 1.1). These vary in the mandated percentage of women directors and the types of companies to which the quotas apply (e.g. state-owned, publicly listed companies), size (number of employees and/or revenue) and board composition (e.g. boards with 6 or more seats). In most cases, sanctions apply for non-compliance. Sanctions include fines, non-payment of director fees, voiding appointments, and deregistration and/or corporate dissolution. In some countries, such as Denmark and the Netherlands, the law requires companies to set non-binding quotas with a comply or explain model (where companies must either comply with the quota or publicly explain why they do not) rather than sanctions.

In other countries, soft law, policy-based voluntary recommendations have been adopted to increase the proportion of women directors on boards. Australia, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom have incorporated recommendations for voluntary targets and/or gender diversity reporting requirements within corporate governance guidelines to encourage board diversity. Compulsory reporting requirements on gender diversity are an important mechanism for accountability on women's leadership. These requirements are in place in several countries, including Australia and the United Kingdom, and have contributed to greater representation of women on boards. Between 2009 and 2019, Australia has achieved greater than 30% women directors on its top listed companies without the use of legislated quotas—one of only three countries in the world to do so (University of Queensland Business School 2021). By contrast, progress in the United

Kingdom has been much slower. The proportion of women directors only increased from 15% to 20% in a 5-year period (2014–2019), and more than a third of companies still have no women on their executive teams (McKinsey Global Institute 2020).

The latest global figures on the proportion of board seats held by women in listed companies suggest that both mandatory and voluntary measures can effectively increase women's representation on corporate boards. At 25%, Africa has the highest representation of women directors of any region (McKinsey Global Institutw 2019). African countries have put in place a mix of measures to increase women's representation, including mandatory quotas for the boards of SOEs in Kenya and South Africa and the integration of gender diversity into corporate governance principles in Kenya, Malawi, Morocco, Nigeria, and South Africa (African Devlopment Bank 2015).

A study of the European experience finds a clear difference in outcomes: countries that have implemented quotas demonstrate significant increases in women's representation and have achieved better results in increasing company diversity than those using softer measures (Kantar 2020). After introducing legislation in 2014, the proportion of women on boards in France increased from 13% in 2014 to 37% in 2019 (Deloitte Global Centre for Corporate Governance [GCCG] 2019). Similarly, Germany introduced legislation in 2015 and the proportion of women directors increased by 7% between 2016 and 2019 (Deloitte GCCG 2019). By comparison, European countries that adopted voluntary measures have more modest changes in women's representation, such as Finland (0.5% average increase) and Sweden (3.4% average increase) for the period 2013-2019 (Deloitte GCCG 2019). In both cases, the pre-existing proportion of women was already high relative to other countries in the top ten. Of the top 10 countries with the highest percentage of women on boards, half have enacted legislation with mandatory quotas (Table 1.1).

Many countries have introduced legislation recently. Therefore, it is not yet possible to determine the long-term impact on women's representation on boards and whether the increasing representation of women equates to an increase in the influence of women on corporate boards, including their ability to achieve board chair positions. Additionally, while regulation mandating minimum representation is a strong predictor of more gender-diverse boards, social norms continue to play a key role in determining the effectiveness of both hard and soft law measures to improve gender diversity (Institutional Shareholders Services Inc 2017).

Table 1: Board Seats and Voluntary or Mandatory Quotas, Selected Countries

Country	Board seats held by women (2019) (%)	Legislated quotas
Norway	41.0%	Yes
France	37.2%	Yes
Sweden	33.3%	No
Finland	31.9%	No*
New Zealand	31.5%	No
Belgium	30.5%	Yes
Italy	29.3%	Yes
South Africa	26.4%	No
Germany	26.2%	Yes
Australia	25.4%	No

*Government bodies and state-owned enterprises in Finland are required to have an equal boardroom representation of men and women.

Note: South Africa has the Broad-based Black Economic Empowerment Act that includes an objective to increase the extent to which black women own and manage new enterprises and facilitate their access to economic activities, infrastructure, and skills training but does not include any specific targets and/or quotas for board representation.

Source: Deloitte Global Center for Corporate Governance. 2019. *Women in the Boardroom: 6th edition.* London.

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Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative.

6% more likely to have a woman CEO and, where women comprise 40%–60% of the total workforce, the likelihood increases to 15% (ILO 2019). Additionally, organizations with gender-balanced boards are more likely to have women in senior management (3% more likely) and top executive positions (6% more likely) (ILO 2019).

3. Inclusive workplace culture and policies: Organizations with a diversity policy are 3% more likely to have a woman CEO (ILO 2019). A 2019 survey of 13,000 companies found that over 57% agreed that diversity initiatives improved business outcomes and 59.7% agreed that having an inclusive business culture and inclusive policies enhances a company's ability to attract and retain talent (ILO 2019). Flexible workplace and family-friendly policies have also been shown to address the gender pay gap (Tyson, Klugman, and Smith 2016).

4. Quotas and targets: The existence of quotas and/or targets have a significant positive impact on the representation of women on boards (ADB 2016b) (see Box 1, page 2; Box 2, page 4; and Box 3, page 7).

5. Investors are increasingly pushing companies to make progress in gender diversity in leadership.

In the US, big investors such as State Street Global Advisors, Blackrock, Glass Lewis, and Vanguard have launched campaigns to increase gender diversity on corporate boards, directly contributing to 2.5 times more women directors appointed in 2019 than in 2016 (Gormly and Gupta et al 2021). In 2017, State Street voted against the re-election of directors at about 400 companies due to their failure to address gender inequality on their boards. In 2019, Glass Lewis recommended that investors vote against the nominating committee chairs of companies with no women directors (ILO 2019).

Companies with significant ownership by "The Big Three" investment agencies (State Street, Blackrock, and Vanguard) were more likely to have women in board chair positions and on nominating and audit committees, according to a 2021 study. The study also concluded that these findings suggest that investor-driven campaigns have genuinely increased the prominence of women on boards, rather than being the mere tokenism observed through other measures (Gormly and Gupta et al 2021).

A similar trend has been observed in Australia. The Australian Council of Superannuation Investors, which oversees more than A$1 trillion in assets, is advocating for greater accountability of company directors, including for meeting gender diversity targets for corporate boards. The council has recommended to vote against the appointment of male directors to ASX 300 companies with no women on their boards and will now target those with just one woman. It is also pushing for a new target for ASX 300 boards of 40% men, 40% women, and 20% either (Khadem 2020).

While not all global trends and experiences are directly applicable to the Pacific context, the link between more women in business leadership and positive business performance outcomes is clear. These outcomes contribute, in turn, to private sector growth and economic development. There are many strategies to boost representation of women in leadership roles within business, with the most effective approaches tailored to the local political, social, and economic context. While the approach may differ, it is evident that businesses in the Pacific must foster the growth and innovation on offer by tapping the potential of Pacific women and taking action to increase the representation in leadership roles.

Box 3: How the South Pacific Stock Exchange is Working to Help More Women Get on Fiji's Corporate Boards

By including gender policy recommendations and reporting requirements in its updated rules for listed entities, the South Pacific Stock Exchange (SPX) has helped to quickly and significantly increase women's representation as board directors in Fiji.

SPX, Fiji's only licensed securities exchange, plays a regulatory role, among other functions, and sets benchmarks for corporate governance, including through its listing rules. In a 2019 change to these rules, SPX recommended that all listed companies implement a policy for increasing gender diversity on their board and required companies to report on their progress.

All of SPX's 20 listed entities now have a gender diversity policy in place, and women's board representation in Fiji has grown considerably—increasing by 39% since 2019. In 2021, women now hold 25% of director positions (Figure 1, below). This increase exceeded SPX's expectations. The organization hoped the new rules would lead to at least a 20% representation of women in director positions after 3 years.[1]

According to former chief executive officer of SPX, Krishika Narayan,[2] there was considerable debate about whether the gender diversity requirements should be voluntary or mandatory. Krishika reflected that while the listed companies generally agreed on the need to appoint women directors, many did not want quotas, arguing that appointments should be merit-based. While this is a common argument against the application of quotas, it fails to acknowledge the structural barriers and social norms that can put women at a disadvantage when seeking leadership positions.

Krishika pointed out that mandatory requirements bring particular challenges, including the question of how SPX would respond if a company claimed to have exhausted all avenues and yet were still unable to appoint women to their board. To manage these challenges, SPX decided to try a voluntary approach and to monitor progress through corporate governance reports.

While the SPX requirements created new incentives for companies to appoint women, SPX also took action to make it easier for them to do so, by working to build the pool of suitably qualified women candidates. All listed companies were encouraged to nominate women to participate in a leadership training program, women leaders were profiled on the SPX website, and SPX developed a database of women

leaders that companies could use to find suitable board candidates. Krishika noted that "there is a whole perception that we are not able to find female leaders or that women are not putting their hand up for board positions. It is a combination of the two."

Krishika wants more women to have opportunities "to raise their hands, to push up," and feels in part that this requires changing women's mindsets. She reflected that "when we talk to women on the ground about their aspirations, goals and where do they see themselves, it does not naturally occur to them that they can have a career path." Krishika also feels that it is necessary to challenge the widespread view "that [as a woman] I always have to be there first for my family, second for my career."

Figure 1: Women Directors on Boards of Companies Listed on the South Pacific Stock Exchange in Fiji 2017–2021 (%)
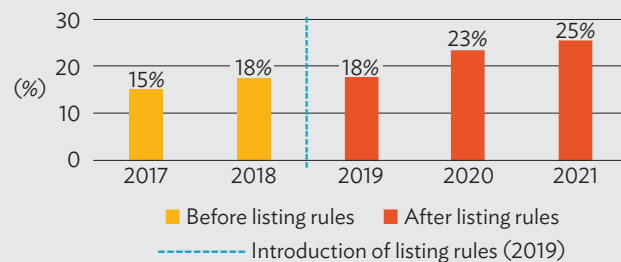
Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative. Data provided by the South Pacific Stock Exchange, 26 March 2021.

Support for women—at home and work—is also needed to enable increased women's leadership. This can include efforts to ensure equal opportunity is given to all candidates for a role, supporting women to build networks, and providing flexibility to women balancing unpaid care responsibilities. For Krishika, awareness needs to start "from the home front, then we will be able to make a great change. That change will come in its own time."

Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative. Based on author's interview with Krishika Narayan, former SPX chief executive officer, 18 March 2021.

1   Note: This also occurred because one company got de-listed. Therefore, its all-male board is no longer reflected in the data.
2   Krishika Narayan's term as chief executive officer of the South Pacific Stock Exchange concluded in 2020.

2. STUDY RESULTS AND COUNTRY PROFILES

A. PACIFIC (REGIONAL PROFILE)

The Pacific region[1] is comprised of thousands of islands spread across a large expanse of the Pacific Ocean and is one of the most linguistically and culturally diverse regions in the world. Pacific island countries share many similar development challenges, including small populations, remoteness, limited natural resources, narrow economic bases, and vulnerability to climate change and disasters (ADB 2021b). The economies of many Pacific island countries are characterized by a narrow set of economic drivers and dependence on remittances and development assistance. Although several economies experienced accelerated growth during 2015–2019, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has continued to have a significant economic impact due to reduced tourism and fishing revenue, increased import costs, and decreased government revenues (ADB 2021b).

This profile includes a regional summary of data from the 14 Pacific developing member countries (DMCs) of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) included in the study—the Cook Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Fiji, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea (PNG), Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu. This group reflects the diversity of the Pacific and includes the smallest and largest populations and economies in the Pacific, as well as businesses of varying size and scale.

Private sector overview

Relative to other parts of the world, the private sector in the Pacific is small. Public expenditures dominate most Pacific economies, and the public sector is often the main employer (ADB 2021b). Private sector business activity is constrained by the geography of the region. Pacific nations tend to be remote, have small markets, and have a high susceptibility to natural hazards, which frequently result in disaster events. These factors are difficult to overcome or avoid and add significantly to the cost of doing business (Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative [PSDI] 2020). Private sectors in the Pacific are characterized by widespread agriculture and fishing, small manufacturing sectors, tourism sectors of varying sizes, and, particularly in the case of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands, substantial mineral resources (ADB 2004).

The private sector across the Pacific is also characterized by the region's large informal economies. Many of those working in the informal economy are also engaged in subsistence work, which remains critical to the lives of Pacific islanders, especially for those living outside major cities and urban areas. Overly burdensome regulations can impose significant constraints on businesses seeking to formalize, contributing to the size of the informal sector. The Pacific is also marked by underdeveloped capital markets, which can restrict access to finance and reduce investment capacity—creating further challenges for Pacific businesses (ADB 2016a).

Many Pacific economies are dominated by state-owned enterprises (SOEs), which are responsible for managing significant infrastructure assets and providing essential services and utilities to individuals and businesses. Pacific SOEs often struggle to operate on commercial principles, and poorly performing SOEs can be a drain on public finances and increase the cost of doing business (PSDI 2020).

The private sector in most Pacific countries mainly comprises micro, small, and medium enterprises, including many family-owned and run businesses. In East Asia and the Pacific, it is estimated that such enterprises generate 42% of economic activity (ADB 2018a). As the largest economies in the region, Papua New Guinea and Fiji are the only two countries that have publicly listed companies on national stock exchanges.

Across the region, businesses have felt the impact of COVID-19 acutely, leading to widespread job losses, most notably in the tourism sector. Surveys conducted in 2020 of 134 businesses across 16 Pacific island countries (including 11 from this study), report that revenues have declined in 88% of businesses (Pacific Trade Invest [PTI] 2021), with more than half reporting a drop of 40% or more Business Link Pacific 2021). Women-owned businesses have felt the pandemic more acutely. In July 2020, 71% of women-owned businesses reported a very negative impact (compared to 57% of male-owned businesses), and 41% reported having to temporarily close their businesses (compared to 29% of male-owned businesses) (PTI 2020).

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1   For the purposes of this study, the Pacific comprises the 14 Pacific developing member countries of the Asian Development Bank (ADB): Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.

Women's economic participation and leadership

Across the Pacific, women's formal economic participation in both labor markets and business is low. In most Pacific countries, twice as many men as women were in paid employment outside of the agricultural sector (Pacific Community 2017). Differences between men and women are also clear in labor market participation, wages, and occupations between women and men. Women in the Pacific are significantly more likely to be employed in the informal sector, which is associated with lower and more vulnerable incomes (Bucozzi 2021). Women in the Pacific are also primarily responsible for unpaid work in the home, undertaking up to 80% of all unpaid care work (Pacific Women 2020). Women are also far less likely to own and run formal businesses in the region. Only 19% of registered businesses in Fiji are listed in women's names, and women own just 25% of PNG's almost 50,000 small- and medium-sized enterprises (ADB 2018b).

The same social norms and cultural beliefs that restrict women's formal economic participation also limit women's opportunities to take on leadership and decision-making roles in the Pacific. With a regional average of just 7% women parliamentarians, women's political representation in the Pacific is the lowest in the world (Inter-Parliamentary Union n.d.). In 2021, only 3 of 192 countries have no women in national parliament, and all are in the Pacific—the FSM, PNG, and Vanuatu. Although in 2017, the Pacific Community observed that progress was being made on women's leadership within the public service in several countries, with an increasing number of women holding mid to senior-level positions in government departments (Pacific Community 2017).

Research undertaken in 2015 by the Commonwealth Secretariat on the status of women in parliament, government, and the private sector, reported the Pacific average for women director/department heads in the public service was 33%, with 14.5% of private sector executive leadership positions and 15% of SOE board positions held by women (The Commonwealth 2015).[2] A 2012 Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat study similarly found that most Pacific island countries have low levels of women's representation on SOE boards (PIFS 2012).

The COVID-19 pandemic has hurt women's economic participation in the Pacific, deepening existing inequalities and disproportionately affecting women—who already earned less, saved less, and were more likely to hold insecure jobs (United Nations 2020). Global trends have shown that women are losing jobs at a higher rate than men because of the pandemic's impact on sectors that employ large numbers of women, such as retail, tourism, and hospitality (Baird and Hill 2020). Available data indicates that these trends also apply to the Pacific. In Samoa, 64% of those reporting job losses were women (ILO 2020). In Solomon Islands, 24.8% of women reported losing their job, compared to 21.5% of men (World Bank 2020b); and in PNG, women heads of households were twice as likely to report having stopped working as male heads of households (World Bank 2020a). Globally, women represent a majority of the tourism workforce (Griffith University 2020). The devastation of the tourism industry in Fiji, where women work mainly in low level, part-time or casual jobs, such as receptionists and cleaners, and tourism is an important market for women-owned micro and small enterprise, has hit women particularly hard (Fiji Women's Rights Movement 2020b). The already high burden of unpaid labor for women in the Pacific has increased due to school closures, and the more rigorous cleaning practices necessitated by the pandemic. These additional responsibilities make it even more difficult for women to balance paid employment with caring and household duties (Pacific Women Support Unit 2020).

Women in the Pacific were already twice as likely to experience gender-based violence compared to the global average (Pacific Community 2021). Gender-based violence in the region has increased due to movement restrictions and a high degree of household financial stress and uncertainty. Lockdown periods have seen a significant increase in gender-based violence, with crisis centers reporting increased calls to helplines—150% in Samoa and 505% in Fiji—compared to the same period in the previous year and a 54% increase in the number of cases presenting to the crisis center in Tonga (UN Women 2020).

Enabling environment for gender equality

The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was adopted in 1979 to address the extensive discrimination faced by women and persistently unequal opportunities for men and women. While there are several international declarations and conventions on human rights and the advancement of women, CEDAW is the most central and sets out comprehensive set of rights for women in civil, political, economic, social, and cultural fields. Most Pacific DMC governments have ratified CEDAW and have translated these commitments into national legislation and policy that promotes the advancement of women and girls in the region (Table A.1).

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2   Note: Private sector executive leadership positions defined as chief executive officers, chief financial officers, and/or chief operating officers.

In addition to the comprehensive rights outlined in CEDAW, commitments specifically targeting women's representation in leadership have also been made at the global level. In 1990, the United Nations (UN) Economic and Social Council passed resolution 1990/15, which calls on governments, political parties, trade unions, and professional and other representative groups to adopt a 30% minimum proportion of women in leadership positions, with a view to achieving equal representation. This resolution has become the global target for women's representation in business leadership and has been championed by advocacy groups and organizations, such as the 30% Club. Very few organizations in the Pacific have committed to the 30% although Kumul Consolidated Holdings in PNG has recently adopted this target for its boards and senior management [see Box 9, page 54].

In the Pacific, the women's movement has a long history of collective action and advocacy to advance gender equality in the region. In 1994, a regional plan of gender equality actions, the Pacific Platform for Action on the Advancement of Women and Gender Equality, was endorsed by delegates from 22 Pacific island countries and territories in advance of the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing. Many of the priority actions outlined in the platform are reflected in the Beijing Platform for Action that was endorsed by 189 member countries at the world conference and remains the global blueprint for the acceleration of gender equality and the empowerment of women. Together, CEDAW, the Beijing Platform for Action and the Pacific Platform for Action on the Advancement of Women and Gender Equality have informed national gender equality policies and commitments across the region. More recently, the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals have challenged countries to achieve 17 goals by 2030, including a dedicated goal on gender equality (Goal 5).

Yet, women in the Pacific remain more vulnerable to poverty, experience high levels of gender-based violence, have limited access to reproductive health services, and have low levels of political participation (Pacific Community 2017). The 20-year review of the Beijing Platform for Action noted that "in most [Pacific island countries and territories], attention, resources and capacity committed to gender equality have been insufficient to achieve substantive gains" (Pacific Community 2017).

Table A.1: Policy and Legislative Commitments to Gender Equality

Country	CEDAW	Constitution prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex/gender	Maternity leave provisions	Sexual harassment prohibition	Legislation on gender-based violence
Cook Islands	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Federated States of Micronesia	Yes	Yes	Partial**	No	
Fiji	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Kiribati	Yes	Partial	No	Yes	Yes
Marshall Islands	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
Nauru	Yes	Yes	Partial**	No	Yes
Niue	Yes*	No	Partial**	No	No
Palau	No	Yes	Partial**	No	Yes
Papua New Guinea	Yes	Partial	Partial**	No	Yes
Samoa	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Solomon Islands	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Tonga	No	No	Partial**	No	Yes
Tuvalu	Yes	Partial	Yes	No	Yes
Vanuatu	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes

CEDAW = Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women.
Note: *Niue has ratified CEDAW through New Zealand **These countries have maternity leave provisions for public sector employees only.
Source: Asian Development Bank. 2018. *Women and Business in the Pacific.* Manila.

Figure A.1: Comparison of Women's Political and Business Leadership in the Pacific, 2021
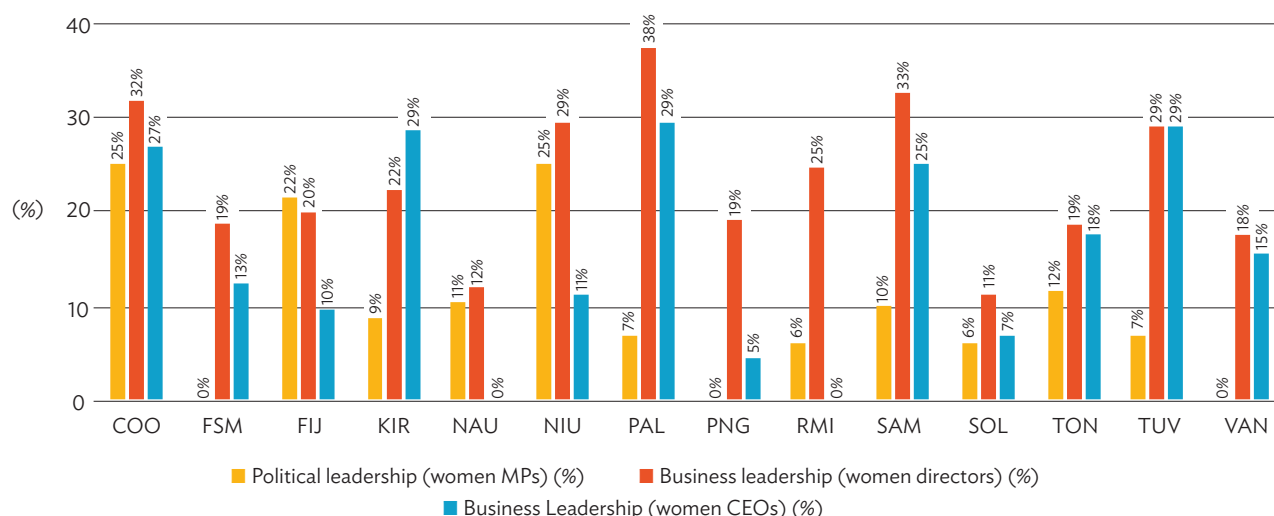
CEO = chief executive officer, COO = Cook Islands, FSM = Federated States of Micronesia, FIJ = Fiji, KIR = Kiribati, MP = Member of Parliament, NAU = Nauru, NIU = Niue, PAL = Palau, PNG = Papua New Guinea, RMI = Republic of the Marshall Islands, SAM = Samoa, SOL = Solomon Islands, TON = Tonga, TUV = Tuvalu, VAN = Vanuatu.
Source: Political leadership: Pacific Women in Politics. Business Leadership (directors and CEOs): Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

The *2012 Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration* was introduced to address the lack of progress and counter the negative social and economic impacts of widespread gender inequality in the region. It reflected an "invigorated commitment to efforts to lift the status of women in the Pacific and empower them to be active participants in economic, political and social life" (PIFS 2016). The declaration includes two key commitments on women's leadership and decision-making and recommends that governments:

1. Adopt measures, including temporary special measures (such as legislation to establish reserved seats for women and political party reforms), to accelerate women's full and equal participation in governance reform at all levels and women's leadership in all decision making.

2. Advocate for increased representation of women in private sector and local level governance boards and committees.

In a report detailing the region's progress in the priority areas of the Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration, the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat noted that "there are few women across all levels of leadership in the Pacific, from education and community/village positions to local government to national political positions" and that the lack of political will to address gender inequality in the region represented a "critical challenge for democracy, gender equality and the sustainable development of the region" (PIFS n.d.).

Women in business leadership

Although women's representation in politics in the Pacific is considerably below that of men, the data collected for this study tells a more positive story in business. While the findings of this study cannot be directly compared with other datasets, due to variations in the methodology and approach, the 21% average for representation of Pacific women as board directors appears to exceed the global average of just 17% (Deloitte GCCG 2019). Consistent with global trends, the percentage of women as board chairs is much lower than directors. However, the 11% regional average for women as board chairs is more than double the global average of 5.3% (Deloitte GCCG 2019).

Across the sample, women hold 13% of chief executive officer positions, which compares favorably with the global average of 4.4% (Deloitte GCCG 2019). Despite the small size of the private sector in most Pacific countries, these findings are significant because they suggest a growing commitment by businesses in the region to address the persistent challenges women face in reaching leadership positions. These challenges include caring responsibilities, fewer training and promotion opportunities, and social norms that dictate women's career paths and perceptions of their leadership capabilities.

The sample for this study includes over 300 organizations across 14 countries. However, partial or complete data on the composition of boards and/or senior management are available

for 274 organizations. The sample includes five organization types—industry associations, publicly listed companies (Fiji and PNG only), SOEs, regional/multi-country organizations, and other private sector organizations such as provident funds and non-listed companies. Despite being owned and controlled by government, SOEs are included in the sample as they are among the largest commercial entities in most Pacific countries and are significant employers. Similarly, regulatory institutions, such as central banks, are included in the study because of their importance in setting the frameworks for business. The sample was restricted to organizations with a board operating in the region, to focus on measuring the extent of leadership opportunities for Pacific women. Family-owned businesses and business activity in the informal sector are not captured in the study. The study has acknowledged limitations, described in Appendix 1 (page 93).

Figure A.2: Pacific Regional Average for Board Chairs, Directors, and Chief Executive Officers (%)
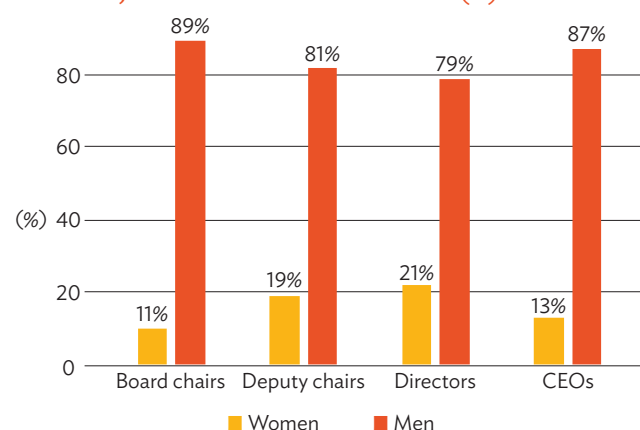
Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

Women are better represented as board directors than members of parliament in the Pacific.

With the world's lowest representation of women in national Parliaments, the Pacific is often considered a region where women have limited opportunity to take on leadership and decision-making roles. Figure A.1 compares data on the proportion of women members of parliament (MPs) with data collected on the proportion of women directors and women chief executive officers across the 14 countries in the sample. Excluding Fiji, the representation of women as directors in the Pacific is higher than as MPs—ranging from 1 percentage point higher in Nauru to 31 percentage points higher in Palau. Ten countries have a higher proportion of women CEOs than MPs (ranging from 5 percentage point in PNG to 29 percentage

points in Kiribati, Palau and Tuvalu). However, four countries had a greater proportion of women MPs than CEOs. Notably, in Niue, the proportion of women MPs is 14 percentage points higher than for CEOs.

Table A.2: Board Composition in the Pacific

	Boards (%) (n = 234)
Boards with no women directors	32%
Boards with fewer than 30% women directors	41%
Boards with between 30% and 50% women directors	17%
Boards with gender parity	11%

n = number (sample size).
Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

Women across the Pacific are underrepresented in business leadership on boards and as CEOs.

Despite regional and national commitments to promote gender equality and women's leadership, men still dominate leadership and decision-making roles in business. As a region, the Pacific is yet to achieve the minimum proportion of 30% women in leadership positions called for in UN Economic and Social Council resolution 1990/15. The regional average for women directors is 21%, 11% for board chairs, 19% for deputy chairs, and 13% for chief executive officers (Figure A.2).

The proportion of women directors in the Pacific is above the global average.

The average proportion of women directors on boards in the Pacific across all organization types and countries is 21%, which places the Pacific above the global average of 17%. However, more than 30% of all boards in the sample have no women directors, and a further 41% of boards have fewer than 30% women directors (Table A.2). In a more positive finding, 28% of all boards have more than 30% women directors, and 11% have at least equal numbers of men and women directors—in some instances, boards have more women than men.

Figure A.3 highlights the variation in the proportion of women directors across the 14 countries in this sample. While three countries average more than 30% women directors on their boards, five average between 20% and 29% women directors, and six countries average 20% or fewer.

Women are far less likely than men to hold the most senior leadership roles.

Figure A.3: Board Seats in the Pacific by Country (%)
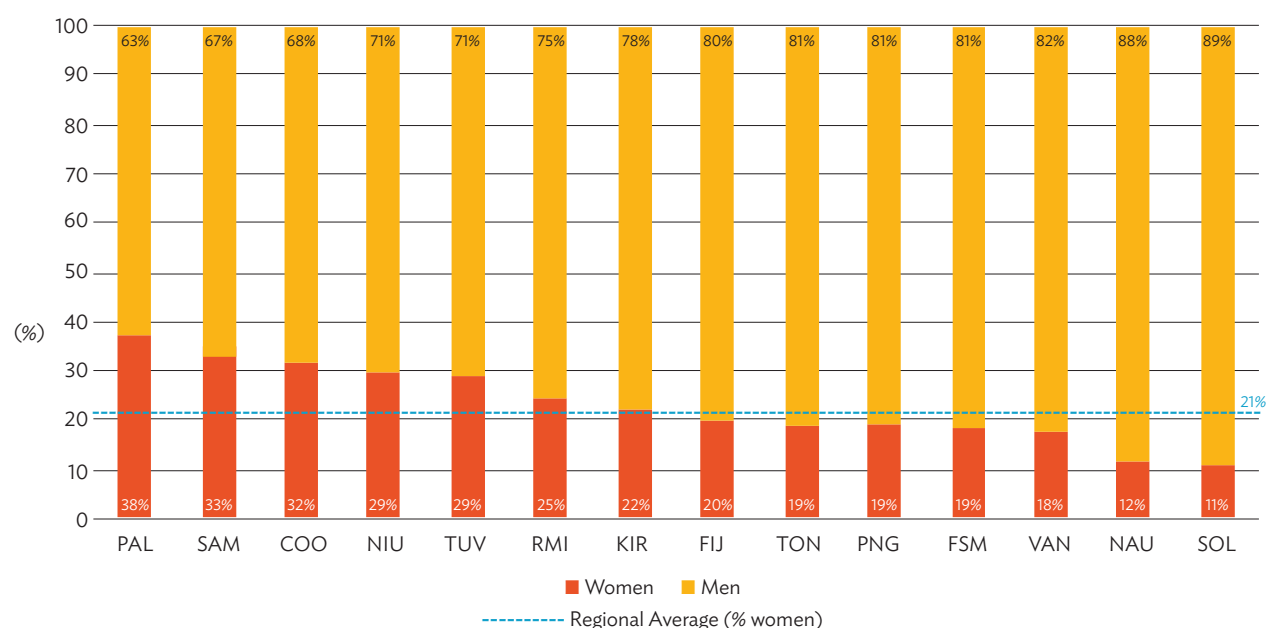
COO = Cook Islands, FSM = Federated States of Micronesia, FIJ = Fiji, KIR = Kiribati, NAU = Nauru, NIU = Niue, PAL = Palau, PNG = Papua New Guinea, RMI = Republic of the Marshall Islands, SAM = Samoa, SOL = Solomon Islands, TON = Tonga, TUV = Tuvalu, VAN = Vanuatu.

Note: the regional average also includes eight boards of regional organizations. Sample size varies by country n = 24, 122, 74, 17, 31, 105, 18, 282, 52, 284, 43, 85, 42, 172.

Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

Table A.3: Women's representation in board positions in the Pacific

	Number of women	Number of men	Women (%)	Sample size
Board chairs	25	207	11%	n = 232
Deputy chairs	14	58	19%	n = 72
Directors	299	1131	21%	n = 1430

n = number (sample size).

Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

While women are increasingly represented on boards worldwide, women still encounter barriers to reaching the highest levels of leadership. Globally, women comprise just 4.4% of CEOs and 5.3% of board chairs (Deloitte GCCG 2019). While women hold 21% of board director positions in the Pacific, the proportion of women holding board chair positions is considerably lower at 11% (Table A.3). For CEO positions, the Pacific regional average is 13% (Table A.4). These findings reflect ongoing global inequalities and confirm that women—in the Pacific and globally—face significant constraints when attempting to reach the highest levels of leadership.

When expanding the data to also include other senior management personnel, there is a more positive picture of representation of women. Women in the Pacific account for

34% of CFOs and 29% of senior management personnel overall (Table A.4). Based on available data, women's representation in these senior roles in the Pacific aligns with global trends, in which women are overrepresented senior management functions of human resources and administration that are often considered women's roles. However, further research would be required to confirm this.

The proportion of women board chairs and deputy chairs varies considerably by country. The proportion of women board chairs ranges from 0% in Kiribati, Niue, and Solomon Islands to 29% in Tuvalu (Figure A.4). For four countries in the sample (Cook Islands, Nauru, Palau, and Tuvalu), the proportion of women board chairs is 20% or higher—four times the global average. Excluding Nauru, the countries with the highest proportion

Table A.4: Women's Representation in Senior Executive and Management Positions in the Pacific

	Number of women	Number of men	Women (%)	Sample size
CEO	30	194	13%	n = 224
CFO/COO	37	71	34%	n = 108
All senior management personnel (including CEOs and CFO/COOs)	311	755	29%	n = 1066

CEO = chief executive officer, CFO = chief financial officer, COO = chief operating officer, n = number (sample size).

Note: Senior management personnel includes executive leadership (CEO, CFO, COO, and equivalent) and all staff designated manager, department head, or equivalent.

Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

Figure A.4: Board Chairs in the Pacific by Country (%)
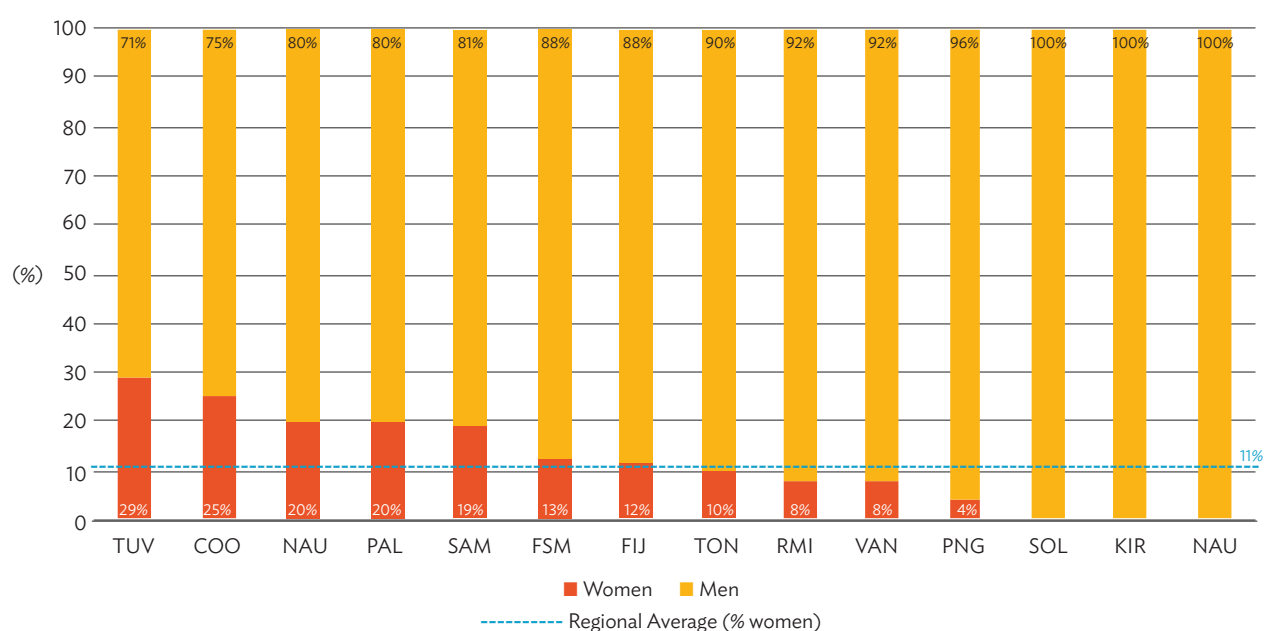
COO = Cook Islands, FSM = Federated States of Micronesia, FIJ = Fiji, KIR = Kiribati, NAU = Nauru, PAL = Palau, PNG = Papua New Guinea, RMI = Republic of the Marshall Islands, SAM = Samoa, SOL = Solomon Islands, TON = Tonga, TUV = Tuvalu, VAN = Vanuatu.

Notes: The regional average also includes 11 chairs of boards of regional organizations. Sample Size varies by country n = 7, 12, 10, 5, 21, 8, 51, 10, 13, 13, 46, 19, 5, 1.

Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

of women board chairs also have a higher proportion (20% or greater) of women directors. These results suggest a correlation between the overall representation of women on boards and the opportunity for women to take on board chair roles, consistent with global findings.

The available data for deputy chair positions was much more limited than board chairs. Four countries have no women deputy chairs (Cook Islands, FSM, Kiribati, andNauru).[3] Three other countries had deputy chair data available for

10 or more organizations, showing a higher proportion of women in these roles compared to board chairs for all three. PNG had 18% women deputy chairs, Fiji 20%, and the Marshall Islands 27%. In two countries, Niue and Samoa, women comprise 100% of deputy chairs, but this is based on a sample of only one organization in both cases. Given the limited data available, it is difficult to draw any conclusions on the representation of women as deputy chairs and any correlation with the representation of women as either directors or board chairs.

3   However, this is based on a sample of five organizations or fewer for Cook Islands, Nauru, Palau, and Tuvalu.

Table A.5: Women's Representation in Leadership in the Pacific by Organization Type

	Industry associations	Other private sector organizations	Publicly listed companies	Regional private sector organizations	State-owned enterprises
Board chairs	26% (n = 27)	7% (n = 58)	6% (n = 31)	11% (n = 9)	10% (n = 107)
Deputy chairs	50% (n = 14)	7% (n = 15)	0% (n = 1)	0% (n = 5)	16% (n = 37)
Directors	35% (n = 188)	18% (n = 371)	23% (n = 179)	18% (n = 65)	18% (n = 627)
CEOs	53% (n = 15)	9% (n = 55)	7% (n = 28)	25% (n = 8)	11% (n = 118)
All senior management personnel (including CEOs and CFOs/COOs)	53% (n = 34)	33% (n = 356)	23% (n = 142)	45% (n = 20)	26% (n = 514)

CEO = chief executive officer, chief financial officer (CFO), chief operating officer (COO), n = number (sample size).

Notes: Data are not reported by organization type for women's representation as deputy chairs, executives, or senior leadership personnel due to very small numbers. Senior management personnel includes executive leadership (CEOs, CFOs, COOs, and equivalent) and all staff designated manager, department head, or equivalent.

Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

Figure A.5: Women on Boards and in Senior Management Positions in the Pacific by Organization Type (%)
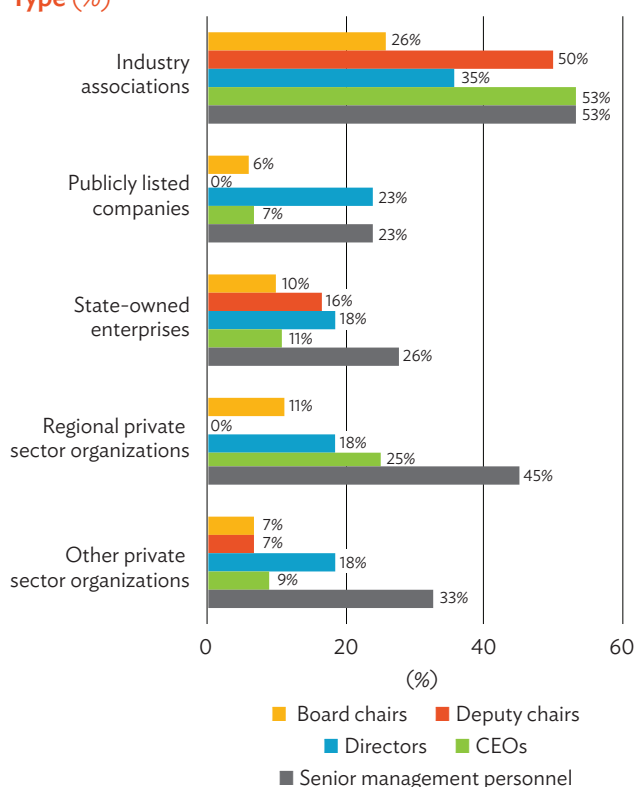
CEO = chief executive officer, CFO = chief financial officer, CCOO = chief operating officer, n = number (sample size).

Notes: Senior management personnel includes executive leadership (CEO, CFO, COO, and equivalent) and all staff designated manager, department head, or equivalent. Sample size varies with organization type and leadership position. Board chairs: n = 27, 31, 107, 9, 59. Deputy chairs: n=14, 1, 37, 5, 15. Directors: n = 188, 179, 627, 65, 371. CEOs: n = 15, 28, 118, 8, 55. Senior management personnel: n = 34, 142, 514, 20, 356, each by order of appearance in the figure.

Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

Industry associations have the highest representation of women across all leadership levels.

When all leadership roles are analyzed by organization type, industry associations have the highest representation of women (Table A.5). Chambers of commerce comprise a vast majority of this group, with a small number of tourism and hospitality associations also included in the sample. Women's higher levels of representation in these organizations are significant because, as membership-based organizations, chambers of commerce can reflect the business community in each country. The average representation of women in industry associations is 26% for board chairs, 35% for directors, and 50% for deputy chairs. These positive findings in industry associations are consistent across most countries in the study.

Industry associations have achieved gender parity or greater for deputy chairs (50% women), CEOs (53% women), and all senior management personnel (53% women) (Figure A.5). These results demonstrate that it is possible to achieve equality in leadership and decision-making roles in the Pacific. Notably, women also hold senior business leadership positions in industry associations, including board chairs, deputy chairs, and CEOs in countries where women's overall representation in business leadership is low—such as PNG and Solomon Islands.

The data present a less consistent story for the other organization types in the sample (Figure A.5). Regional private organization types—other private sector organizations and publicly listed companies—women are most represented at the director level, comprising 18% and 23% of directors, respectively (Table A.5). The representation of women in these two organization types drops considerably for board chair and deputy chair roles. Women hold 2 out of 31 (6%) board chair roles for publicly listed companies and 4 out of 58 (7%) board

Table A.6: Women's Representation in Leadership in the Pacific by Sector

	Agriculture and fisheries	Diversified	Finance	Media and communications	Manufacturing	Resources	Retail	Tourism	Transport and infrastructure	Services	Unspecified	Utilities
Board chairs	0% (n = 16)	0% (n = 12)	11% (n = 61)	26% (n = 19)	11% (n = 9)	8% (n = 13)	0% (n = 2)	18% (n = 11)	0% (n = 29)	0% (n = 1)	16% (n = 31)	14% (n = 28)
Deputy chairs	20% (n = 5)	0% (n = 2)	6% (n = 18)	25% (n = 4)	…	0% (n = 5)	…	60% (n = 5)	11% (n = 9)	…	42% (n = 12)	17% (n = 12)
Directors	13% (n = 92)	19% (n = 68)	24% (n = 377)	19% (n = 118)	16% (n = 64)	10% (n = 68)	23% (n = 13)	28% (n = 80)	15% (n = 165)	0% (n = 10)	32% (n = 201)	17% (n = 174)

… = not available, CEO = chief executive officer, n = number (sample size).

Notes: Diversified organizations conduct business activities in multiple sectors. Organizations in the "unspecified" category include chambers of commerce and other peak bodies and state-owned enterprises that did not fit into the sectors identified, such as housing organizations.

Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

chair roles for other private sector organizations. A similar pattern is observed in these same two organization types for women in senior management. The proportion of women drops from 23% in senior management overall to 7% for CEOs in publicly listed companies and 33% in senior management to 9% for CEOs in other private sector organizations.

Women hold board seats across all sectors, although the proportion varies considerably.

Table 1.6 summarizes women's average representation across all leadership levels for the 12 sectors covered by this study. The sample size varies considerably across sectors, from those with a small number of organizations represented (services and retail) to those with a sample size of 30 or more organizations (finance, utilities, and transport and infrastructure). Lack of data reduced the sample size for some sectors.

Women are represented on boards across 11 of the 12 sectors included in this study, though no individual sector is greater than 30%.[4] Differences in the proportion of women on boards by sector could be attributed to several factors, such as higher workforce participation by women in some sectors, greater openness to women as leaders, and/or preferences by women to nominate for boards within certain sectors. Further research would be required to establish the underlying factors contributing to differences between sectors in women's leadership.

Across the study, a consistent trend of higher proportions of women as directors than board chairs is evident. The media

and communications sector challenges this trend, with a higher proportion of women board chairs (26%) than directors (19%) (Figure A.6). The media and communications and tourism sectors exceed the regional average representation of women for both directors and board chairs. Women occupy both board chair and director positions in the utilities and manufacturing sectors, although neither sector has yet achieved the regional average for both roles. Some utilities operating in traditionally male-dominated sectors, such as energy, are implementing measures to increase the representation of women in their workforces and leadership so women's representation may increase over the coming years (see Box 11, page 72).

Women are far less likely to reach the chief executive officer position in some sectors.

Of the twelve sectors covered by this study, half have no women CEOs in any organization in that sector (Table A.7). These six sectors—diversified, manufacturing, resources, retail, services, and transport and infrastructure—represent a quarter of the total number of organizations in the sample, including 30 organizations in the transport and infrastructure sector. These sectors fall well below the regional average of 13% women CEOs. Based on available data, the poor representation of women as CEOs in these sectors is matched by low representation in senior management personnel overall, particularly in the diversified and resources sectors. This could, in part, reflect the workforce composition of more male-dominated industries, but may also suggests that there

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4   "Unspecified" comprises organizations that don't have a dedicated sector focus, such as chambers of commerce. Therefore, it has not been included in this statement, despite having 30% representation of women.

Figure A.6: Women Board Chairs and Directors in the Pacific by Sector (%)

Tourism — 18% / 60% / 28%
Unspecified — 16% / 42% / 32%
Media and communications — 26% / 25% / 19%
Finance — 11% / 6% / 24%
Utilities — 14% / 17% / 17%
Manufacturing — 11% / …(■) / 16%
Diversified — 0% (■) / 0%(■) / 19%
Retail — 0% (■) / …(■) / 23%
Services — 0% (■) / …(■) / 0% (■)
Transport and infrastructure — 0% (■) / 11% / 15%
Resources — 8% / 0%(■) / 10%
Agriculture and fisheries — 0% (■) / 20% / 13%

(%)

■ Board chairs ■ Deputy chairs
■ Directors
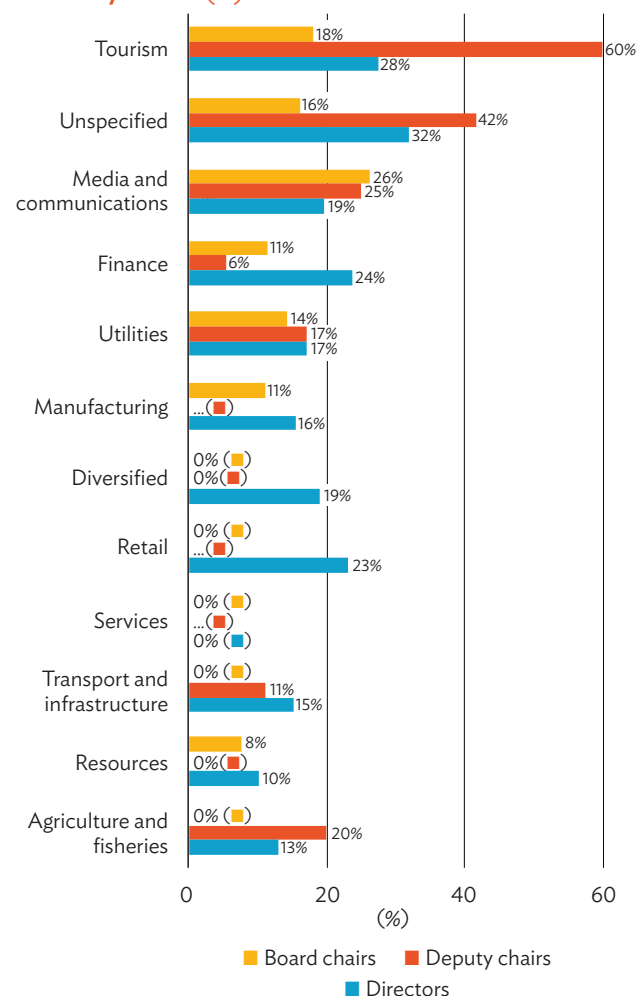
... = not available.
Note: Diversified organizations conduct business activities in multiple sectors. Organizations in the "unspecified" category include chambers of commerce and other peak bodies and state-owned enterprises that did not fit into the sectors identified, such as housing organizations. Sample size varies by sector and leadership role. Board chairs: n = 11, 31, 19, 61, 28, 9, 12, 2, 1, 29, 13, 16. Deputy chairs: n = 5, 12, 4, 18, 12, 0, 2, 0, 0, 9, 5, 5. Directors: n = 80, 201, 118, 377, 174, 64, 68, 13, 10, 165, 68, 92, each by order of appearance in the figure.
Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

have been no targeted efforts to recruit women and create pathways for their advancement within these sectors.

In the six sectors where women hold CEO positions, the proportion of women varies significantly (Figure A.7)—from below the regional average (13%) in agriculture and fisheries (7%) and media and communications (9%), to just above the regional average in utilities (16%), finance (17%), and unspecified (35%), to gender parity in tourism (50%). In these

Figure A.7: Women in Senior Management Roles in the Pacific by Sector (%)

Tourism — 50% / 45%
Unspecified — 35% / 42%
Media and communications — 9% / 29%
Finance — 17% / 35%
Utilities — 16% / 29%
Manufacturing — 0% (■) / 22%
Diversified — 0% (■) / 18%
Retail — 0% (■) / 0% (■)
Services — 0% (■) / 29%
Transport and infrastructure — 0% (■) / 22%
Resources — 0% (■) / 15%
Agriculture and fisheries — 7% / 17%

(%)

■ CEOs
■ Senior management personnel
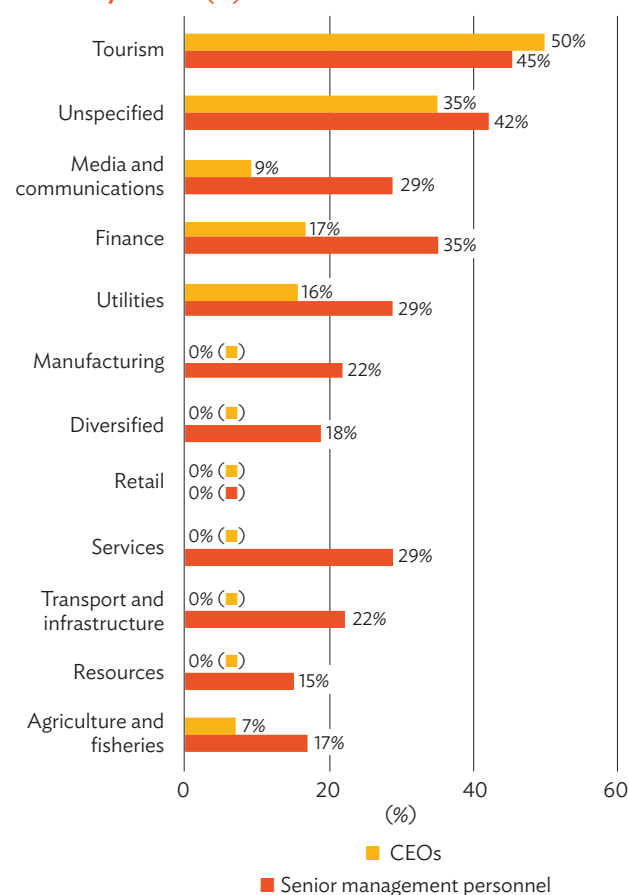
CEO = chief executive officer.
Note: Diversified organizations conduct business activities in multiple sectors. Organizations in the "unspecified" category include chambers of commerce, other peak bodies, and state-owned enterprises that did not fit into the sectors identified, such as housing organizations. Senior management personnel includes executive leadership (CEOs, chief financial officers, chief operating officers, and equivalent) and all staff designated manager, department head, or equivalent. Sample size varies by sector and leadership role. CEOs: n = 6, 23, 22, 66, 32, 9, 9, 2, 2, 30, 9, 14. Senior management: n = 1, 65, 98, 377, 103, 32, 45, 2, 7, 197, 39, 60, each by order of appearance in the figure.
Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matter dataset.

same six sectors, women represent 17% to 45% of senior management personnel, suggesting that the global trend linking women's overall representation in organizations to the likelihood of women holding chief executive officer roles also exists within Pacific businesses.

The tourism sector has the highest representation of women across all leadership levels.

Tourism exceeds regional averages in every category of leadership. The sample does not include government

Table A.7: Women's Representation in Leadership in the Pacific by Sector

	Agriculture and fisheries	Diversified	Finance	Media and communications	Manufacturing	Resources	Retail	Tourism	Transport and infrastructure	Services	Utilities	Unspecified
CEOs	7% (n = 14)	0% (n = 9)	17% (n = 66)	9% (n = 22)	0% (n = 9)	0% (n = 9)	0% (n = 2)	50% (n = 6)	0% (n = 30)	0% (n = 2)	16% (n = 32)	35% (n = 23)
All senior management personnel (including CEOs and CFOs/COOs)	17% (n = 60)	18% (n = 45)	35% (n = 377)	29% (n = 98)	22% (n = 32)	15% (n = 39)	0% (n = 2)	45% (n = 31)	22% (n = 197)	29% (n = 7)	29% (n = 113)	42% (n = 65)

 CEO = chief executive officer, CFO = chief financial officer, COO = chief operating officer.

Note: Diversified organizations conduct business activities in multiple sectors. Organizations in the "unspecified" category include chambers of commerce, other peak bodies, and state-owned enterprises that did not fit into the sectors identified, such as housing organizations. Senior management personnel includes executive leadership CEO, CFOs, COOs, and equivalent) and all staff designated manager, department head, or equivalent.

Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

tourism entities and is, therefore, small (11),[5] but women are consistently well represented in leadership in private sector tourism organizations across all countries where such data are available. The sample of tourism organizations is mainly comprised of tourism industry associations, which aligns with the earlier finding that industry associations are the organization type with the highest representation of women in leadership.

Government tourism authorities and visitor boards play important roles in the tourism sector, alongside private sector tourism organizations, which provides an opportunity to compare women's representation in similar leadership roles between government and private sector organizations. Government tourism authorities are not part of the study sample and are not included in the overall statistics given the focus on the private sector. However, examining the leadership composition of government tourism entities suggests that there is less representation of women in leadership in these organizations than in the private sector tourism organizations (Figure A.8). No women are chairs of the 8 sampled government tourism entities, compared with 2 women chairs in the 11 private sector tourism entities. Women's representation as CEOs of government tourism entities (17%) is also far lower than private sector tourism entities (50%).

The proportion of women as directors and CEOs in SOEs is lower than in other organization types.

Figure A.8: Women Board Chairs, Directors, CEOs, and Senior Management Personnel of Government and Nongovernment Tourism Entities in the Pacific (%)

CEO = chief executive officer.

Notes: The sample of government tourism entities comprises a group of tourism authorities and promotion offices in the Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu. Sample Size varies by leadership role. Board Chairs: n = 11, 8. Directors: n = 80, 43. CEOs n = 6, 6. Senior management: n = 31, 9.

Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

SOEs account for a significant proportion of the organizations captured in the study—137 of the 274 organizations where data are available—and play important roles in the economy of most Pacific countries, as commercial entities, employers, and service providers.

Governments have unique opportunities to influence the diversity of SOE leadership through director appointment

5   The tourism sector sample includes six tourism industry associations, one publicly listed company, one SOE, and three other private sector organizations that provide tourism services. It does not include government tourism bodies.

Box 4: Building Networks to Leadership in Fiji's Tourism Industry

Building strong networks with peers can deliver important professional opportunities to Pacific women, including in the tourism sector, according to Fantasha Lockington, the first woman chief executive officer (CEO) of the Fiji Hotel and Tourism Association (FHTA) in a decade. The FHTA is one of the largest private sector tourism organizations in the Pacific.

Fantasha, who has now been at the helm of the 56-year-old association for 5 years, reflects that the tourism sector is characterized by commercially minded business owners who "want somebody who is going to do what they say they can do, and they'll give you a chance so you can prove yourself."

But there are also challenges for women seeking leadership roles in tourism, including the 7-day a week nature of the business and expectations for work-related travel and mobility. "You're expected to be on call all the time, so it does impact your personal relationships," Fantasha says. These factors can be a significant barrier to women taking on progressively senior roles in the industry, particularly given how uneven and gendered the distribution of unpaid family and care responsibilities can be. Overall, Fantasha says "it can be a difficult business to get ahead in, but if you've got tourism in your blood, there is a tendency for you to stay for the long term which is probably why I'm still in it."

An important factor enabling Fantasha to succeed despite the sector's challenges was her access to reliable, quality childcare. Fantasha described the "wonderful" woman who worked as a nanny for her family and emphasized "that I could not do the things that I needed to do if I could not rely on her [and] trust her."

Another important factor in Fantasha's career success has been the networks she has built. Reflecting on her career—which includes 26 years with Fiji's national airline as well as work in luxury cruising and public sector housing development—Fantasha highlights building her own networks as a critical tool for career progression. This was particularly important given her lack of access to formal mentorship programs.

Fantasha took deliberate steps to build these networks after noticing that work and career information was often shared by men in social and informal settings. She describes how she, and other women in management, "noticed just over coffee one day that the guys always would stay back for much longer than the girls. The girls would rush off home because

[of their] families. Or they [the men] met up at the pub for a beer or kava, and a lot of the times they talked about work." Fantasha saw that these opportunities enabled men to "knowingly or unknowingly … exchange information that women were not privy to."

In response, Fantasha and a group of peers established a forum to deliberately discuss work. This was a recognition that "men did things differently." They established the forum at a time when Fantasha considers that it seemed less obvious for women to participate in such exchanges, or less socially acceptable for them to do so—particularly when many of them had young families. It was through her participation in sessions like these with her women peers that Fantasha found out about a new MBA program that was being offered and was encouraged to apply. The forum also led to job opportunities.

Fantasha also seeks out opportunities to share her experiences with young women, including to help them build a sense of their overall career pathway and a greater understanding of industry. She recognizes that "no one tells these women that it's actually okay for them to make time to be with their own peers."

Although women's professional experiences have changed over time—particularly as education has become more accessible for women and men—Fantasha believes that networks and reputation continue to play a role in shaping access to opportunities. "It's a Pacific thing, where a male—because of who he is—might get better recognition than a younger, smarter, female [who] just does not compare to his network or no one knows who she is." But, in Fantasha's view, the impact of attending the same schools or universities is less important in the private sector than the public sector. "It's less obvious or less prevalent in the private sector [where] your education, your experience, your qualification has a higher priority."

Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative. Based on author's interview with Fantasha Lockington, CEO, Fiji Hotel and Tourism Association, 28 April 2021.

Table A.8: Women's Representation on State-Owned Enterprise and Other Boards in the Pacific

	All organizations	State-owned enterprises	Organizations other than state-owned enterprises
Board chairs	11% (n = 232)	10% (n = 107)	11% (n = 125)
Directors	21% (n = 1430)	18% (n = 627)	23% (n = 803)
Chief executive officers	13% (n = 224)	11% (n = 118)	16% (n = 106)

Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

processes. However, compared to other types of organizations, SOEs have lower proportions of women as directors and CEOs (Table A.8). The average proportion of women board chairs in SOEs is in line with other organization types. Of 25 women board chairs in the study, 11 are in SOEs.

SOEs operate in every sector covered by this study but are concentrated in the utilities, transport and infrastructure, and finance sectors, which together account for nearly two-thirds of all SOEs in the study.

Sector-specific trends in women's representation as board chairs, observed in the broader study, are also evident in SOEs. Women's representation as chairs of SOE boards is highest in the media and communications sector (33%), followed by

finance (24%), resources (20%), and utilities (12%) (Table A.9). There were no women chairs of SOE boards in the agriculture and fisheries, manufacturing, or transport and infrastructure sectors. The lower representation of women as SOE board chairs within these sectors is consistent with the overall trends.

Women's representation as directors on SOE boards also varies considerably by sector (Table A.9, Figure A.9). Women account for 28% of SOE directors in the finance sector and 21% in the media and communications sector, but just 4% of SOE directors in the resources sector and 11% in the agriculture and fisheries sector. Women's representation as SOE directors is consistent with the overall sector trends for the sectors with higher representation of women. However, in the sectors with lower representation of women, the average representation for SOEs is even lower than the overall sector average. The sector average for women board directors for all organizations in the diversified sector is 19%, compared to 12% for diversified SOEs. Likewise, the overall representation of women directors for the resources sector is 10%, compared to 4% for resources SOEs.

The highest proportion of women CEOs in SOEs is within the finance sector, at 30% (Table A.9). This figure includes five development bank CEOs. Women also comprise 14% of SOE CEOs in the utilities sector, 10% in agriculture and fisheries, 10% in unspecified SOEs, and 7% in media and communications. Women are not represented as CEOs of SOEs in the diversified, manufacturing, resources, retail, services, transport and infrastructure, or tourism sectors. Given that SOEs dominate many of these sectors—particularly transport and infrastructure, 27 of the 30 organizations where board

Table A.9: Women's Representation in State-Owned Enterprise Leadership in the Pacific by Sector

	Agriculture and fisheries	Diversified	Finance	Media and communications	Manufacturing	Resources	Retail	Services	Tourism	Transport and infrastructure	Utilities	Unspecified
Board chairs	0% (n = 10)	0% (n = 4)	24% (n = 17)	33% (n = 9)	0% (n = 2)	20% (n = 5)	...	...	0% (n = 1)	0% (n = 25)	12% (n = 25)	10% (n = 9)
Directors	11% (n = 65)	12% (n = 17)	28% (n = 105)	21% (n = 62)	13% (n = 8)	4% (n = 28)	...	...	33% (n = 9)	14% (n = 144)	19% (n = 135)	16% (n = 56)
Chief executive officers	10% (n = 10)	0% (n = 2)	30% (n = 20)	7% (n = 14)	0% (n = 2)	0% (n = 2)	0% (n = 1)	0% (n = 1)	0% (n = 1)	0% (n = 26)	14% (n = 29)	10% (n = 10)

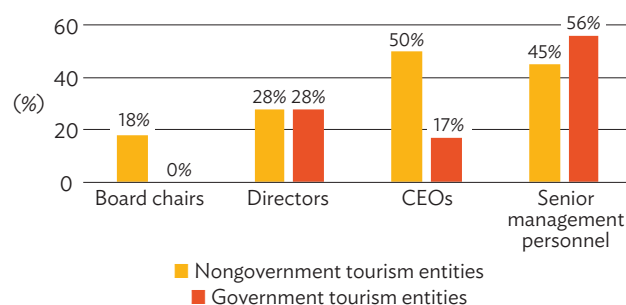... = not available. CEO = chief executive officers.

Notes: Diversified organizations conduct business activities in multiple sectors. Organizations in the "unspecified" category include chambers of commerce, other peak bodies, and state-owned enterprises that did not fit into the sectors identified, such as housing organizations.

Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

Box 5: Banking on Women: Pacific Development Banks Challenge Global Trends in Women's Leadership.

When Anna Mendiola became the president and chief executive officer (CEO) of the Federated States of Micronesia Development Bank (FSMDB) in 2001, she recalls there being very few women in finance. "When I began, all the board members and all the branch managers were male, and the majority of employees were male."

Twenty years later, Anna is one of five women CEOs heading up development banks in the Pacific. Indeed, development banks are leading the charge in increasing women's representation in senior management and on boards in the finance sector in the Pacific. The Bank of Cook Islands (BCI) and FSMDB are the only organizations in the finance sector to have women as both CEO and board chair. Both banks have also achieved greater than gender parity on their boards, with women's representation as directors at 67% (BCI) and 57% (FSMDB).

Globally, in the finance sector women hold less than 2% of CEO positions and less than 20% of board seats, even though a higher proportion of women on bank boards has been linked to greater bank stability (International Monetary Fund 2017). 17% of CEOs in the Pacific finance sector are women, many leading the region's development banks. Women are also well represented on finance sector boards, with a regional average of 24% women directors and 11% women board chairs. Several countries had even higher levels of representation of women on finance sector boards, including Samoa (31%), Tuvalu (38%), the Cook Islands (43%), Palau (50%), and the Federated States of Micronesia (57%).

Vaine Nooana-Arioka, CEO of the Bank of the Cook Islands, observed that the trend towards women in leadership positions has occurred in the last 10 years and coincides with a transition to a more commercial focus for state-owned enterprises, including government-owned banks. The Financial Supervisory Commission in the Cook Islands introduced the "fit and proper" person test that applies standard criteria for senior management and director positions in the finance sector. In Vaine's view, this has contributed to the increase in women directors who have been successful in meeting these criteria. Vaine also noted that the Cook Islands Investment Corporation has strongly encouraged nominations for board positions from the private sector, where women are well represented, increasing the pool of women candidates. These initiatives demonstrate the important role that regulators and statutory authorities can play in supporting women's leadership at an industry level.

For the FSMDB, Anna noted that upgrading the education and qualification requirements for positions at the bank increased the number of applications from women. Now all three branch managers are women, and the majority of employees are women. Anna suggested that having a woman CEO may also have encouraged more women to apply for positions at the bank. However, Anna noted that the pay disparity between men and women remains an issue that will need to be addressed if more women are to be supported into leadership roles. She is hopeful that having a woman CEO, and a majority of women board directors, will lead to greater recognition and action to address the gender pay gap, which may further boost the representation of women in leadership over time.

References:
International Monetary Fund. 2017. *Banking on Women Leaders: A Case for More?* IMF Working Paper. Washington, DC.

Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative. Based on author's interviews with Anna Mendiola, President and chief executive officer of the Federated States of Micronesia Development Bank, 1 August 2021, and Vaine Nooana-Arioka, chief executive officer of the Bank of Cook Islands, 3 August 2021.

Figure A.9: Women as State-Owned Enterprise Board Chairs and Directors in the Pacific by Sector (%)
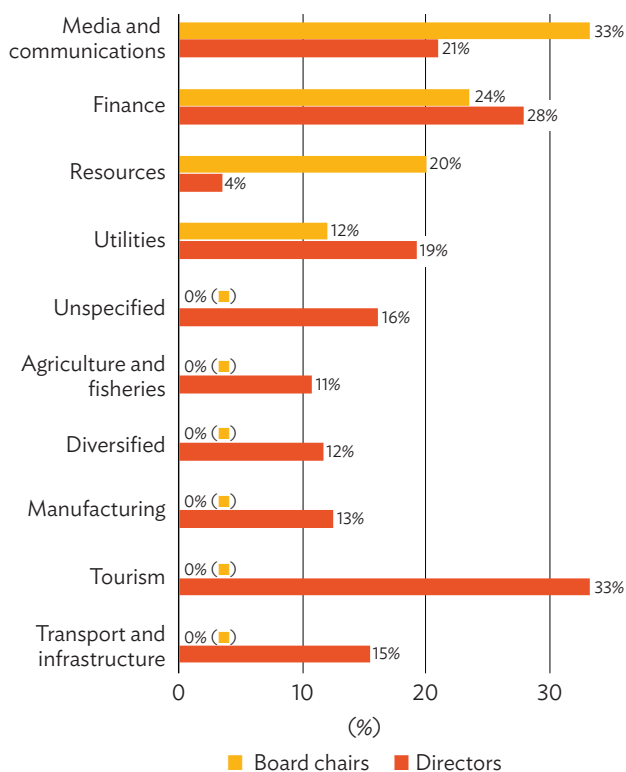
Sector	Board chairs	Directors
Media and communications	33%	21%
Finance	24%	28%
Resources	20%	4%
Utilities	12%	19%
Unspecified	0%	16%
Agriculture and fisheries	0%	11%
Diversified	0%	12%
Manufacturing	0%	13%
Tourism	0%	33%
Transport and infrastructure	0%	15%

(%)

■ Board chairs   ■ Directors

Notes: Diversified organizations conduct business activities in multiple sectors. Organizations in the "unspecified" category include chambers of commerce, other peak bodies, and state-owned enterprises that did not fit into the sectors identified, such as housing organizations. Sample Size varies by leadership level. Board chairs: n = 9, 17, 5, 25, 9, 10, 4, 2, 1, 25. Directors: n = 62, 105, 28, 135, 56, 65, 17, 8, 9, 142.

Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

data is available are SOEs—unsurprisingly, these findings are consistent with the overall sector findings.

The representation of women on SOE boards has stagnated, despite government commitments to increase leadership opportunities for women in these organizations.

Given the prevalence of SOEs in most Pacific economies, the finding of lower representation of women in leadership in SOEs is concerning—particularly given these organizations are subject to specific commitments to increase women's representation in many national gender equality policies. A survey on women's representation on SOE boards conducted by the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (2012) found that women held 96 out of 518 (18.5%) SOE director positions. Almost 10 years later, the expanded sample collected for this study shows no overall change in women's representation on SOE boards. Women hold 113 out of a possible 627 director positions within SOEs, or 18.0%. However, data collected by the Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative since 2012 for a sub-set of countries and SOEs (Figure A.10) shows considerable volatility in women's representation as SOE directors over time. Despite national and regional commitments to support increased representation of women in leadership on SOE boards, this volatility suggests that efforts have not been targeted and have therefore not been sustained.

Figure A.10: Women State-Owned Enterprise Directors by Country, 2012–2021 (%)
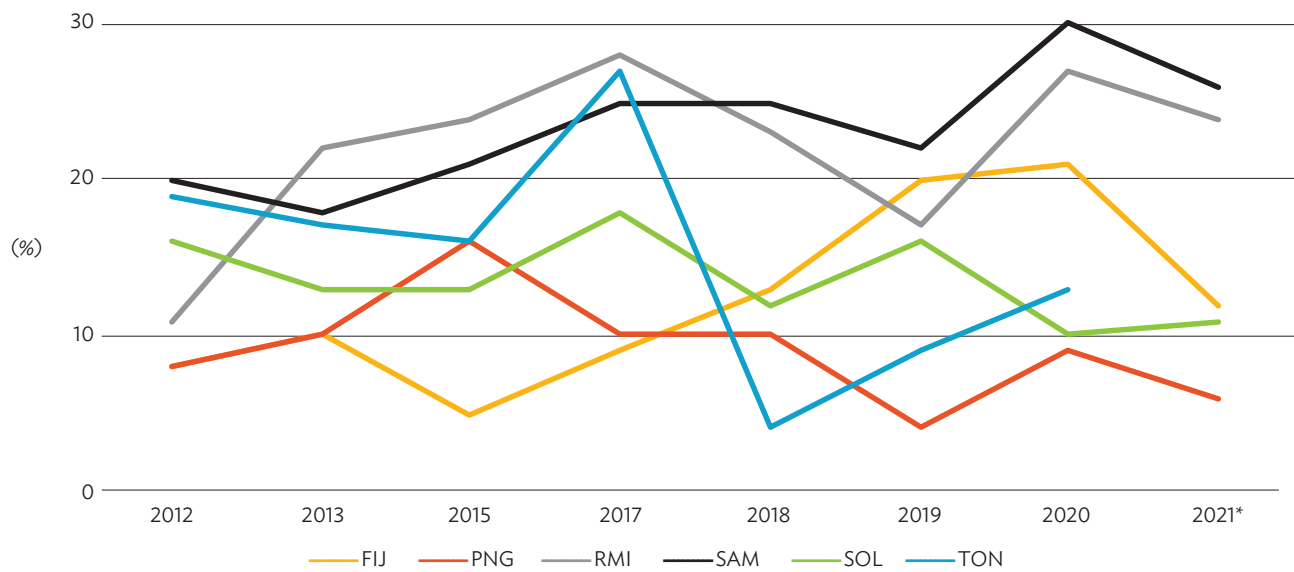
FIJ = Fiji, PNG = Papua New Guinea, SAM = Samoa, SOL = Solomon Islands, TON = Tonga.
Note: Sample Size varies by country and year. *2021 data collection methodology differs from previous years.
Source: 2012–2020: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative. 2021: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

Box 6: Supporting Women-Owned and Led Businesses through Procurement

Money talks. Individual consumers, the private sector, and governments can use their purchasing power to support businesses that are supportive of gender equality.

Femeconomy is one organization advocating for just this—a global social enterprise that educates consumers, business owners, and people making business purchasing decisions about how their choices can create gender equality (Femeconomy n.d.a.). Femeconomy argues that consumers using their collective purchasing power to support women-led businesses can lead to more women in leadership (Femeconomy 2016).

Femeconomy has introduced a certification process for businesses with at least 30% women directors or 50% ownership by women (Femeconomy n.d.b.). The certification enables businesses and consumers to make purchase decisions that support businesses with women leaders. Everything from shoes to professional services are provided through 850 certified brands (Femeconomy n.d.c.). Femeconomy also provides business support and resources for its members, such as a gender equality procurement toolkit to enable businesses to embed gender equality in their supply chains (Femeconomy n.d.a.).

Gender-responsive procurement is an emerging but critical area for the Pacific. The region's governments can mobilize their purchasing power to support gender equality in the region.

For example, Guam has recently signed into law the Support for Women-Owned Businesses Act to give women-owned small businesses an advantage when bidding for government contracts (Charguluf 2021). The Guam Bureau of Women's Affairs and the Guam Women's Chamber of Commerce drove development of the bill—known as Bill No. 71-36, Support for Women-Owned Businesses Act—and Senator Amanda Shelton introduced it to the Legislature in March 2021. The Act, signed in June 2021, requires women-owned businesses to be favored in the Government of Guam's procurement processes. The Act states that government entities must procure supplies and services from eligible women-owned businesses, if their costs are not more than 5% higher than those of the lowest bidder.

Women own only 17% of local businesses in Guam, and this act is intended to help women-owned small businesses flourish by providing them with opportunities to work for the government.

Businesses must be licensed and located in Guam and have filed Guam tax returns for at least 3 consecutive years to be eligible. They must be a small business, with at least 51% women-ownership, and be certified as either a woman-owned small business or an economically disadvantaged woman-owned small business by the U.S. Small Business Administration.

Guam Governor Lou Leon Guerrero, recognising that women were disproportionately impacted during COVID-19, reflected that the act is "a way to help women who are struggling…even more so during this pandemic…to get back on their feet again" (Charguluf 2021).

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Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative.

B. COOK ISLANDS

The Cook Islands, a self-governing territory in free association with New Zealand, has a population of 20,200 (ADB 2020a) spread across 15 major islands with a combined land area of 240 square kilometers. The Cook Islands economy is small, narrowly based, and sensitive to outside factors such as disasters triggered by natural hazards (ADB 2019a), yet the country's GDP per capita of $18,171 (ADB 2020a) is the highest of the Pacific developing member countries of the Asian Development Bank.

The Cook Islands' robust private sector generates 67% of GDP (ADB 2019a) and 65% of employment (Government of the Cook Islands 2018). The tourism sector is particularly significant, contributing 60% of GDP in 2017 (ADB 2019a). Like many tourism-dependent economies, the country has been profoundly impacted by COVID–19. After sustained economic growth during 2012–2019, the economy contracted 5.9% in 2020 and is forecast to contract 26% in 2021 (ADB 2021a).

Women's economic participation and leadership

Women's labor force participation is slightly lower than men's; 67% compared with 77% (Government of the Cook Islands 2018).[6] Despite this, women are more than twice as likely to report that their main activity as home duties, and women's average annual incomes are just 85% of those reported by men (Government of the Cook Islands 2018).[7] Women are more likely than men to be employed in service occupations and clerical roles (Government of the Cook Islands 2018), and more women than men work within the informal sector (Government of the Cook Islands 2019).

The Cook Islands has a strong record of women's participation in politics and the public sector. In 2021, there are six women members of parliament, accounting for 25% of all parliamentarians (Pacific Women in Politics 2021). Men and women are generally equally represented in the public service,[8] although women are overrepresented in administrative and clerical roles (Government of the Cook Islands 2020).

Enabling environment for gender equality

The Cook Islands has a strong enabling environment for gender equality and is making progress promoting women's empowerment (Government of the Cook Islands 2019). The government has ratified CEDAW and introduced several pieces of national policy and legislation to advance gender equality. The Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012 provides workplace protections, including maternity leave (Tavola 2014). The Family Protection and Support Act 2017 provides protections for women and children against gender-based violence. The National Policy on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment and Strategic Plan of Action 2011–2016 and 2019–2024 recognizes the need to address "attitudinal and institutional" barriers to gender equality (Government of the Cook Islands 2011) and articulates a goal "to advance gender equality and enhance women's empowerment ensuring the active contribution and meaningful participation of both Cook Islands women and men in all spheres, and at all levels, of development and decision making" (Government of the Cook Islands 2001). Additionally, the National Sustainable Development Plan 2016–2020 sets out the priorities of the Government of the Cook Islands and addresses gender equality and women's empowerment in goal nine, which aims to "accelerate gender equality, empower all women and girls, and advance the rights of youth, the elderly and disabled" (Government of the Cook Islands 2016).

Despite these commitments, the resources dedicated to advancing gender equality are limited. The 2020–21 budget estimates allocated 0.3% of all spending to this priority (Government of the Cook Islands 2020). The third national indicator report assessed the status of goal nine as "of concern and regressing" (Government of the Cook Islands 2020). Gender equality policy is advanced by a small Gender Development Office, which has two staff (Government of Australia 2019).

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6   Resident population 15 years and older by sex, region, and labor force indicators.

7   Cook Islands average annual incomes are NZ$18,677 for men and NZ$15,856 for women (resident population 15 years and older by sex, region and income range). Home duties are reported as the main activity of 19.3% of women and 7.1% of men (resident population 15 years and older by sex and main activity).

8   1106 women, 1185 men.

Data on the status of women has not been routinely gathered in the Cook Islands. The *Cook Islands 2012 Gender Profile* report systematically collected and analyzed data on the status of men and women—the first time this had been done in the Cook Islands (Government of the Cook Islands and Secretariat of the Pacific Community 2015). However, as of 2021, the profile has not been updated.

Women's socio-economic status is intertwined with men's power and control over women. In Cook Islands 33% of women report experiencing violence by an intimate partner in their lifetime (Pacific Community 2021). Women in the *Pa Enua* (outer islands) experience stronger gender norms and are relatively more vulnerable due to geography and more dependent on natural resources than women elsewhere in the country (Government of Australia 2019). For example, in the Pa Enua, women make up just 21.3% of public service employees, which reflects the nature of the work opportunities in that area (Government of the Cook Islands 2020).

Women in business leadership

The Cook Islands has a strong foundation for women's leadership in business. Women's labor force participation is very high and public sector employment has close to gender parity. The small Cook Islands sample comprises 13 organizations.[9] However, the data collected show that women's representation as directors, board chairs, CEOs, and senior management personnel exceeds the regional average.

The representation of women on boards and as senior executives in the Cook Islands is well above the regional average.

Women are well represented on most boards in the Cook Islands (Table B.1). Two boards in the sample have no women directors (17%), approximately two-thirds have more than 30% women directors, and two boards (17%) have gender parity.

Women make up 32% of directors on boards in the Cook Islands sample, well above the regional average of 21% (Table B.2). Women's representation as board chairs (25%) is also above the regional rate. No women deputy chairs were recorded in the sample, though these data were only available for three boards.

Table B.1: Board Composition in the Cook Islands

	Boards (%) (n = 12)	Regional average
Boards with no women directors	17%	32%
Boards with fewer than 30% women directors	25%	41%
Boards with between 30% and 50% women directors	42%	17%
Boards with gender parity	17%	11%

n = number (sample size).
Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

Women comprise 27% of CEOs and 39% of senior management personnel in the Cook Islands, compared with 13% and 29% across the region (Table B.3). The proportion of women in the CFO/COO role is also extremely high, at 50%.

Women's representation is high on boards of SOEs and industry associations in the Cook Islands.

Women are represented at a particularly high rate on the boards of industry associations (32%) and SOEs (38%) (Table B.4). Women's high representation on SOE boards is notable given the overall regional trend of lower representation of women on SOE boards. Two of the three women board chairs observed in the sample in the Cook Islands are on SOE boards.

Table B.2: Women's Representation in Board Positions in the Cook Islands

	Number of women	Number of men	Women (%)	Sample size	Regional average (% women)
Board chairs	3	9	25%	n = 12	11%
Deputy chairs	0	3	0%	n = 3	19%
Directors	24	50	32%	n = 74	21%

n = number (sample size).
Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

9   Data availability varies between organizations.

High levels of women's representation in leadership in the Cook Islands may reflect the organizational types and sectors present in the business sector.

The overall position of women in leadership in the Cook Islands private sector may reflect the high proportion of finance sector organizations among those included (4 of 12 organizations where director data are available) (Table B.5). The Cook Islands sample does not include any organizations in sectors where representation of women tends to be lower, such as resources or agriculture and fisheries.

Table B.3: Women's Representation in Senior Executive and Management Positions in the Cook Islands

	Number of women	Number of men	Women (%)	Sample size	Regional average (% women)
CEO	3	8	27%	n = 11	13%
CFO/COO	4	4	50%	n = 8	34%
All senior management personnel (including CEOs and CFO/COOs)	28	44	39%	n = 72	29%

CEO = chief executive officer, CFO = chief financial officer, COO = chief operating officer, n = number (sample size).
Note: Senior management personnel includes executive leadership (CEOs, CFOs, COOs, and equivalent) and all staff designated manager, department head, or equivalent.
Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

Table B.4: Women's Representation in Leadership in the Cook Islands by Organization Type

	Industry associations	State-owned enterprises	Other private sector organizations
Board Chairs	50% (n = 2)	29% (n = 7)	0% (n = 3)
Directors	32% (n = 22)	38% (n = 39)	22% (n = 13)
CEOs	100% (n = 1)	29% (n = 7)	0% (n = 3)

CEO = chief executive officer, n = number (sample size).
Notes: Data are not reported by organization type for women's representation as deputy chairs, executives, or senior leadership personnel due to very small numbers. Although the study includes five categories of organization type, data are only available for three in the Cook Islands sample.
Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

Table B.5: Women's Representation in Leadership in the Cook Islands by Sector

	Finance	Media and communications	Tourism	Transport and infrastructure	Unspecified	Utilities
Board chairs	25% (n = 4)	100% (n = 1)	100% (n = 1)	0% (n = 3)	0% (n = 1)	0% (n = 2)
Directors	43% (n=21)	40% (n=5)	23% (n=13)	19% (n=16)	44% (n=9)	30% (n=10)
CEOs	25% (n = 4)	0% (n = 1)	...	0% (n = 3)	100% (n = 1)	50% (n = 2)

... = not available, CEO = chief executive officer, n = number (sample size).
Notes: Data are not reported by sector for women's representation as deputy chairs, executives, or senior leadership personnel due to very small numbers. Organizations in the "unspecified" category include chambers of commerce and other peak bodies and state-owned enterprises that did not fit into the sectors identified, such as housing organizations. Although the study covers 12 sectors, data are only available for 6 in the Cook Islands sample.
Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

Box 7: Transformational Change Brings Diverse Leadership, Increased Capacity, and More Innovation to the Cook Islands Chamber Of Commerce

After diversifying its board and leadership, the Cook Islands Chamber of Commerce (CICC) is benefiting from new ideas, increased capacity, and higher revenue, according to Fletcher Melvin, chair of the CICC Board.

For 5 years, Fletcher has led efforts to transform the organizational culture of the CICC and develop an inclusive organization that works for the benefit of all Cook Islands businesses. The CICC is now led by a woman chief executive officer, Eve Hayden, has a majority woman workforce, and is close to gender parity on its board.

In Fletcher's view, the CICC previously had an organizational culture that from the outside may have been seen to deter Cook Islanders and women from joining and participating. He says "there were people coming through, and obviously showing raw talent, and not wanting to stay around because of that environment."

This included changing the organization's role and strategic focus, establishing clear guidelines about acceptable behavior within the organization, ensuring that the CICC was an inclusive and supportive environment, and diversifying its board and membership.

Part of the initial organizational transformation was a reassessment of the chamber's role. The CICC had previously been perceived as primarily representing the interests of "big business," with a sometimes adversarial relationship with the government and a tendency to advocate for policies that benefitted a narrow base. With the reassessment of its role, the chamber now focuses on better collaboration and partnership with the government and actively supporting the establishment, growth, and interests of a wide range of businesses. This approach was particularly important to increase the involvement of Cook Islanders in the CICC, and to increase what the organization was delivering for Cook Islands' businesses—including newer businesses, small and medium-sized enterprises, and young entrepreneurs.

The CICC also actively worked to diversify its board, workforce, and membership. Fletcher and other board members undertook to identify, reach out, support, and encourage women candidates to stand for election to the organization's nine-person board. As a result, the board now has four women members. The CICC also recognizes the need to support these new board members. Fletcher observed "you don't want to convince people, then have them come on, and for them to be left high and dry".

The CICC's expanded scope and diversified board have helped enhance the capacity and innovation of the organization, increase its membership, and improve its financial position. Fletcher reflected, "we have just increased the intellectual side of the whole organization by just having a place that ladies are wanting to work. And now we've got these amazing chief executive officers (CEOs), amazing business owners, that are now sitting on the board, just really increasing the capacity of the chamber." Fletcher also noted that the CICC now has "easily five times more revenue and we've tripled our membership. All within 1 year. And we've done that by being more diverse, by reaching out, and by offering more to the business community."

The transformed board also positioned CICC well to respond to opportunities and challenges associated with the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). During the pandemic, the CICC grew from having just one part-time secretarial employee to eight staff members and took on a new role delivering training and business support. This new hands-on, practical approach saw the CICC support sole traders and small business operators to establish email and bank accounts and undertake the business registration processes required to enable them to access government assistance. The CICC also developed and delivered the Cook Island's contact tracing system, funded by a memorandum of understanding with the government.

The CICC has also provided input to the government about the design of a refined COVID-19 support package for the private sector. CEO Eve Hayden reflects that "at the beginning of COVID we had to set up different processes, now 12 months down the track [government] has seen the work we have done, and continue to do, and [we] are very well respected for our ideas."

The supportive board has also enabled the management of the CICC, under Eve's leadership, to embed support for diversity and non-discrimination in the organization's policies. These formal policies are an important complement to the cultural change that has taken place.

Fletcher considers that other organizations would be "crazy" not to consider increasing diversity as a way "to have greater depth in the organization in terms of talents, and ideas."

Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative. Based on author's interview with Fletcher Melvin, Chair, CICC, 27 April 2021; and Eve Hayden, CEO, CICC, 9 March 2021.

C. FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA

The FSM has a population of around 104,500 (ADB 2020a), spread over four states—Chuuk, Kosrae, Pohnpei, and Yap. The economy is dominated by the public sector. In the 2018 fiscal year, government and public enterprises accounted for 32% of GDP, followed by households (26%), private enterprises (19%), and financial institutions (16%) (Graduate School USA Pacific Island Training Initiative 2019).

The private sector (including businesses operating in the informal sector) is the FSM's biggest employer. In 2018, 7,282 people in the FSM worked in the private sector, while 4,740 people were employed by the state governments—the next biggest institutional employer (Government of the FSM, National Statistics Office n.d.).

Women's economic participation and leadership

The number of women employed in the FSM almost doubled during 1994–2000, but workforce participation by women remains lower (48.4%) than men (66.1%) (Government of the FSM, National Statistics Office n.d.). Men dominate employment across all sectors, and women's employment is concentrated in more junior, lower-paid positions (Pacific Community 2012). As a result, women in the FSM are more vulnerable to poverty. For example, households headed by women comprise 39% of those in the lowest three deciles, despite comprising only 20% of households overall (Government of the FSM 2017). The FSM is one of three countries in the Pacific that currently has no women in parliament. It has never had a woman elected to its national congress, and only two women have ever been elected to state legislatures—in Pohnpei and Chuuk.

Enabling environment for gender equality

The FSM has ratified CEDAW. It also has a national gender policy in place and has established a National Women's Council to monitor implementation of the policy and host a biennial national conference of women.

The FSM National Gender Policy 2018 identifies "better representation of women in decision-making" and "addressing barriers facing women in the workforce" as two of its six goals (Government of the FSM 2017). The policy notes that "gender norms that curtail women's opportunities to speak out and participate in decision-making are still strong" (Government of the FSM 2017). The government seeks to improve women's

political leadership opportunities by encouraging perceptions of women as legitimate leaders. It also seeks to achieve gender balance on government bodies, including state boards, and encourage women to apply for management positions. Through the gender policy, the government has committed to addressing the barriers facing women in the workforce, including tackling the gender pay gap, introducing maternity leave legislation for the private sector, and attracting and recruiting women to a broad range of jobs and businesses. The Gender Development Section of the Department of Health and Social Affairs, supported by state level women's offices in Yap, Kosrae, and Pohnpei, is responsible for implementation and monitoring of gender equality policies and commitments (Pacific Community 2012).

Despite these efforts, FSM women continue to be disadvantaged, in part due to insufficient core operation budgets for the federal government's gender division, which leaves women's programs understaffed, underresourced, and marginalized (Government of the FSM 2004). The prevalence of gender-based violence also demonstrates ongoing gender inequalities. One in four "ever-partnered" women in the FSM report having experienced physical and/or sexual violence by their partner in the past 12 months (Government of the FSM 2017).

The Government of the FSM's commitments to women's leadership and the economic empowerment of women were reaffirmed during the 7th Meeting of Pacific Ministers for Women in 2021. The Office of the President noted that the FSM "would adopt appropriate and accessible proactive measures for women's education, training, and employment in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, with an emphasis to develop pathways for women trained in these fields to find or create opportunities in critical industries and in leadership roles" (Government of the FSM, Office of the President 2021).

Women in business leadership

Supportive government policy and commitments have not yet translated into increased representation by women in business leadership. The formal business sector in the FSM is small, and SOEs comprise most of the 12 organizations included in the sample. The dataset for the FSM shows that women are underrepresented in business leadership, consistent with the status of women in other domains of leadership in the FSM.

Women are underrepresented on boards in the FSM.

At 19%, the representation of women on boards in the FSM is just below the regional average of 21%. Six out of the seven boards in the sample have fewer than 30% women directors, and three have no women directors at all (Table C.1). Only one board out of seven has more women directors than men.

C.1: Board Composition in the Federated States of Micronesia

	Boards (%) (n = 7)	Regional average
Boards with no women directors	43%	32%
Boards with fewer than 30% women directors	43%	41%
Boards with between 30% and 50% women directors	0%	17%
Boards with gender parity	14%	11%

n = number (sample size).
Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

There is one woman chair within the sampled organizations (Table C.2).

Women in the FSM hold senior management roles in business, including a chief executive officer position.

Across the FSM sample, out of a possible eight CEO positions, there is only one woman in a CEO role (13%) (Table C.3). There are no women in the three CFO/COO positions in the data, which are often pathways to the CEO role. The representation of women in all senior management roles is 11%. However, this may not be an accurate reflection of the representation of women in these organizations due to the small size of management teams.

SOEs offer opportunities to promote gender diversity in leadership in the FSM.

SOEs represent a majority of the sample for the FSM and are the only organization type to have women on their boards (Table C.4). The proportion of women directors is highest in SOEs (21%). Indeed, the only woman board chair and the only woman CEO in the FSM sample are employed in a SOE, suggesting that women have more prospects for leadership

Table C.2: Women's Representation in Board Positions in the Federated States of Micronesia

	Number of women	Number of men	Women (%)	Sample size	Regional average (% women)
Board chairs	1	7	13%	n = 8	11%
Deputy chairs	0	6	0%	n = 5	19%
Directors	8	35	19%	n = 43	21%

n = number (sample size).
Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

Table C.3: Women's Representation in Senior Executive and Management Positions in the Federates States of Micronesia

	Number of women	Number of men	Women (%)	Sample size	Regional average (% women)
CEO	1	7	13%	n=8	13%
CFO/COO	0	3	0%	n=3	34%
All senior management personnel (including CEOs and CFO/COOs)	5	35	13%	n=40	29%

CEO = chief executive officer, CFO = chief financial officer, COO = chief operating officer, n = number (sample size).
Note: Senior management personnel includes executive leadership (CEOs, CFOs, COOs, and equivalent) and all staff designated manager, department head, or equivalent.
Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

roles within this organization type. From this foundation, it is possible to significantly increase the representation of women on boards, particularly since the government has already committed to increasing women's leadership on state boards under the national gender policy.

The FSM finance sector has the highest representation of women on boards.

As is the case in other Pacific countries, the representation of women on boards (57%) in the finance sector is significantly

above the regional average (21%) (Table C.5). The finance sector, represented by the FSM Development Bank, is the only sector to have both gender parity on its board and a women board chair and CEO—possibly a reflection of its women-dominated workforce (63% of FSM Development Bank staff are women).

Table C.4: Women's Representation in Leadership in the Federated States of Micronesia by Organization Type

	Industry Associations	State-Owned Enterprises	Other Private Sector Organizations
Board Chairs	0% (n = 2)	0% (n = 1)	20% (n = 5)
Directors	…	0% (n = 5)	21% (n = 38)
CEOs	…	0% (n = 1)	14% (n = 7)

… = not available, CEO = chief executive officer, n = number (sample size).
Notes: Data are not reported by organization type for women's representation as deputy chairs, executives, or senior leadership personnel due to very small numbers. Although the study includes five categories of organization type, data are only available for three for the Federated States of Micronesia sample.
Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

Table C.5: Women's Representation in Leadership in the Federated States of Micronesia by Sector

	Agriculture and fisheries	Finance	Media and communications	Resources	Transport and infrastructure	Unspecified	Utilities
Board chairs	0% (n = 1)	100% (n = 1)	…	0% (n = 1)	0% (n = 1)	0% (n = 2)	0% (n = 2)
Directors	14% (n = 7)	57% (n = 7)	20% (n = 5)	0% (n = 6)	0% (n = 6)	…	17% (n = 12)
CEOs	0% (n = 1)	50% (n = 2)	0% (n = 1)	0% (n = 1)	0% (n = 1)	…	0% (n = 2)

… = not available, CEO = chief executive officer, n = number (sample size).
Notes: Data are not reported by sector for women's representation as deputy chairs, executives, or senior leadership personnel due to very small numbers. Organizations in the "unspecified" category include chambers of commerce and other peak bodies and state-owned enterprises that did not fit into the sectors identified, such as housing organizations. Although the study includes five categories of organization type, data are only available for three for the Federated States of Micronesia sample.
Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

D. FIJI

Fiji has a population of 889,300 (ADB 2020a), 85% of whom live on the islands of Viti Levu and Vanua Levu. It is one of the most developed economies in the Pacific, driven primarily by services, which accounted for 67.2% of GDP in 2018 alongside agriculture (13.4%), and manufacturing (13.4%) (ADB 2020a). The tourism sector is particularly significant and accounted for 25.3% of jobs and 32% of GDP in 2019 (World Travel and Tourism Council 2021). COVID–19 has had significant impact on the country and the economy is estimated to have contracted 15.7% in 2020 (ADB 2021c). Fiji has more than 15 SOEs, and government expenditure accounts for approximately 20% of GDP (World Bank 2021).

Women's economic participation and leadership

Labor force participation rates in Fiji differ significantly by gender, with 76.4% of men participating in the labor force, compared with only 37.4% of women (Government of Fiji 2018). Men dominate the formal sector (ADB 2018b), and women represented just 31% of all people engaged in paid and unpaid work in 2018 (Government of Fiji 2018).[10] Women who earn a wage or salary are overrepresented in lower-paid roles, including as clerks, and in the education, health and social work, and manufacturing industries (Government of Fiji 2019). Women comprise just 34.4% of the 9860 people employed as legislators, senior officials, and managers (Government of Fiji 2019).[11] An estimated 85% of Fiji's economic activity is in the informal sector, where women work in fishing and agriculture, hospitality, tourism, and as vendors and producers of handicrafts and other goods (ADB 2018b).

Women's representation in political leadership in Fiji has increased considerably over time—from 4.3% in 1995 to 21.6% in 2020 (Parliament of the Republic of Fiji 2020)—one of the highest among the countries in this study. The first woman parliamentary speaker, Jiko Luveni, was appointed in 2014, and 10 of 51 members (20%) elected to the Fijian legislature during the 2018 elections were women with an additional woman MP elected during a 2020 by-election, taking the total number of women MPs to 11 (Pacific Women in Politics n.d.a). Among legislators, senior officials, and managers, 38.9% are women (World Economic Forum 2021).

Enabling environment for gender equality

The enabling environment for gender equality is strong, with the 2013 Constitution of the Republic of Fiji prohibiting discrimination on gender grounds (Government of Fiji 2013). The Government of Fiji has ratified CEDAW and has introduced national policy and legislation to support gender equality and women's economic empowerment, the most significant of which is the National Gender Policy 2014 (Government of Fiji, Ministry of Social Welfare, Women & Poverty Alleviation 2014). The government has also introduced the Domestic Violence Act 2009 and is drafting a National Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls 2021-2026 to respond to the high levels of gender-based violence. The Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation implements both the National Gender Policy 2014, and the associated Women's Plan of Action 2010-2019 (Government of Fiji, Ministry of Social Welfare, Women & Poverty Alleviation. n.d.). The plan of action prioritizes formal sector employment and livelihoods, equal participation in decision-making, elimination of violence against women and children, access to basic services, and women and the law (Government of Fiji, Ministry of Social Welfare, Women & Poverty Alleviation. n.d.). The ministry was allocated F$145.5 million in the 2021 budget Government of Fiji 2021), including F$5.33 million for women and gender development, equivalent to 0.7% of the total estimated expenditure for the ministry.

Despite the strength of the enabling environment, barriers to women's full economic participation remain. Women have less access to land and finance than men and face particular challenges in engaging in business, including additional unpaid care responsibilities (ADB 2018b). An ADB (2018b) report found that just 19% of registered businesses and companies in Fiji are listed in women's names. High rates of violence against women have severe consequences for their wellbeing and opportunities, and implications for economic development. Among Fijian women, 72% report experiencing violence in their lifetimes (Pacific Women 2017). A 2016 study estimated the cost of domestic violence to the Fijian economy to be 6.6% of GDP (Taylor 2016).

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10   Author's calculations.

11   Author's calculations.

Box 8: Committed to Equal Representation in Leadership at Pleass Beverages and Packaging

At Pleass Beverages and Packaging (PBP), women leaders "get the job done and find people who they can develop to get the job done as well." So says Cate Pleass, Marketing Director at PBP, a Fijian beverages and packaging company with a demonstrated commitment to gender equality.

Women hold 60% of senior management positions at PBP, including general manager, and 50% of seats on the board. This is higher than the overall average for Fiji, where just 25% of senior managers and 24% of board directors are women. These results reflect a long-standing commitment to gender equality, including dedicated efforts to identify and develop high-potential women employees.

PBP identifies talented young women through its performance management system and supports their career growth through mentoring, coaching, and on-the-job learning, alongside formal education. This dedicated support helps PBP retain women in its workforce, allowing them to continue to make positive contributions to the business. Cate says this reflects the strengths of women as mentors and coaches.

PBP has invested in developing an inclusive company culture through initiatives such as the implementation of the PBP Harmony Policy, which emphasizes respect for others' perspectives and choices, and diversity training. These efforts are complemented by an understanding among staff that there is zero tolerance for discrimination of any sort. According to Cate, the policy and training have had a strong positive impact on the organizational culture.

Diversity makes good business sense, according to Cate, "because we're operating in Fiji and we need to have people who understand the Fiji context." PBP, therefore, seeks to ensure its board represents Fiji, with seats held by both Indo-Fijians and iTaukei.

PBP's long-standing and genuine commitment to equality put the business ahead of the curve when the South Pacific Stock Exchange introduced new listing rules in 2019. The new rules recommended listed entities adopt policies to promote gender diversity on corporate boards and require reporting on the impact of such policies. In Cate's view, since the stock exchange introduced these requirements, there has been a noticeable increase in capable, professional young women on boards across Fiji.

There is still work to be done. Women experience specific barriers to their retention in the workforce, professional development, and career progression. Cate noted that some women, who show great ability and are eager to learn, may face family or cultural expectations, which make working challenging. PBP is actively seeking to minimize these barriers and accommodate individuals' needs, including through flexible work arrangements. An additional and complex issue for companies like PBP to address is gender-based violence, which can impact many aspects of women's lives, including their ability to attend work. PBP seeks to support women who experience gender-based violence by referring them to appropriate services.

Cate is keen to share the experiences of women in management with more junior women employees who may be struggling with work, family, and cultural obligations. "[To hear from] a woman in management who is of their own race, who has a similar background to them, who has the same social and cultural pulls that make it difficult sometimes. I think that's the way to really try and empower these women."

Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative. Based on author's interview with Cate Pleass, Marketing Director, PBP, 24 February 2021

Table D.1: Board Composition in Fiji

	Boards (%) (n = 49)	Regional average
Boards with no women directors	27%	32%
Boards with fewer than 30% women directors	51%	41%
Boards with between 30% and 50% women directors	10%	17%
Boards with gender parity	12%	11%

n = number (sample size).
Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

Women in business leadership

Fiji has one of the largest private sectors in the Pacific. The Fiji sample for this study includes 50 organizations, comprising 19 publicly listed companies, 19 SOEs, 3 industry associations, and 9 other private sector organizations. The findings show that, despite a supportive policy environment for gender equality, and strong representation of women in many leadership domains, women are underrepresented as leaders in some sectors and organization types, particularly SOEs.

Women are underrepresented on boards in Fiji.

Twenty seven percent of boards have no representation of women and 51% have more than 0% but fewer than 30% women directors (Table D.1). Just 23% of all boards have more than 30% representation of women. Overall, women make up 20% of directors of boards in Fiji, which is broadly in line with the regional average of 21%.

Women in Fiji hold board chair and deputy chair roles at rates above the regional average.

Women comprise 12% of board chairs in Fiji, just above the regional average (Table D.2). At 20%, the proportion of women in deputy chair roles is above the regional average of 19%. Two out of six women board chairs are in the finance sector.

Women's representation in senior management roles in Fiji is slightly below the regional average.

The data indicate a slightly lower rate of representation of women as chief executive officers, chief financial officers/chief operating officers, and in senior management than the regional average (Table D.3).

Women's representation in leadership in Fiji is driven by industry associations and publicly listed companies.

Together, publicly listed companies (PLCs) and SOEs account for 38 of the 49 organizations in Fiji with available board composition data. Women comprise 24% of board directors in PLCs, but just 12% of directors in SOEs (Table D.4). Similarly, women comprise just 5% of SOE board chairs, but the rate is more than twice as high in PLCs, where women are 11% of chairs.

Like many of the other ADB developing member countries included in the study, women's representation in industry associations in Fiji is high. Although the sample size of industry associations is small, women hold 23% of director positions and 33% of board chair roles in these organizations.

The proportion of women on listed boards in Fiji has increased over time.

Women's representation as directors on companies listed on the South Pacific Stock Exchange (SPX) has increased steadily from 15% in 2017 to 25% in 2021 (Figure D.1).[12] The increase follows a 2019 change to the SPX listing rules which

Table D.2: Women's Representation in Board Positions in Fiji

	Number of women	Number of men	Women (%)	Sample size	Regional average (% women)
Board chairs	6	45	12%	n = 51	11%
Deputy chairs	2	8	20%	n = 10	19%
Directors	56	226	20%	n = 282	21%

n = number (sample size).
Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

12   Source: South Pacific Stock Exchange. 2021 figure also available in the Leadership Matters dataset collected for this study.

Table D.3: Women's Representation in Senior Executive and Management Positions in Fiji

	Number of women	Number of men	Women (%)	Sample size	Regional average (% women)
CEO	4	38	10%	n = 42	13%
CFO/COO	4	12	25%	n = 16	34%
All senior management personnel (including CEOs and CFO/COOs)	67	204	25%	n = 271	29%

CEO = chief executive officer, CFO = chief financial officer, COO = chief operating officer, n = number (sample size).

Note: Senior management personnel includes executive leadership (CEOs, CFOs, COOs, and equivalent) and all staff designated manager, department head, or equivalent.

Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

Figure D.1: Women Directors on Boards of Companies Listed on South Pacific Stock Exchange in Fiji, 2017–2021 (%)
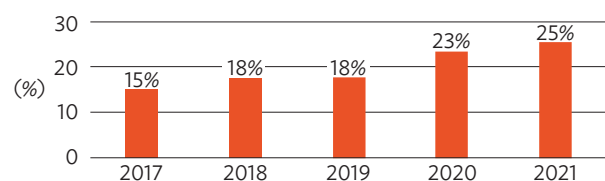
Source: South Pacific Stock Exchange.

recommended firms adopt policies to promote gender diversity on boards and required firms to report on these policies and their outcomes (PSDI 2019).

Women's representation in SOE leadership in Fiji has not made sustained increases.

Women represent just 12% of directors of SOEs in Fiji. While historical data is not directly comparable with this study's sample, the lower level of representation recorded in 2021 compared with 2019 and 2020 suggests the increase is not sustained over time (Figure D.2).

A similar analysis of the leadership composition of 38 government-controlled organizations, SOEs, commercial, non-commercial, and corporate entities was undertaken by the Fiji Women's Rights Movement (2020a).[13] Of the 192 board members included in the sample for that analysis, women held 21% of director positions (Fiji Women's Rights Movement 2020a).

Figure D.2: Women Directors on State-Owned Enterprise Boards in Fiji, 2012–2020 (%)
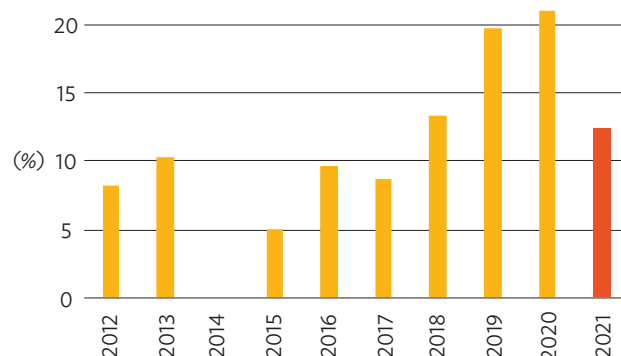
Note: sample size varies year to year therefore direct comparisons are not possible (n=19, 26, –, 25, 15, 25, 26, 29, 29, 19). Data are not available for 2014. ■ = 2021 data collection methodology differs from previous years.

Source: 2012–2020: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative. 2021: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

There are strong sectoral trends in women's representation in Fiji.

Consistent with a trend observed in several countries in this study, women are represented at high levels in the finance sector, accounting for 18% of board chairs and 21% of directors (Table D.5). However, women's representation in leadership is highest in the media and communications sector, where 40% of board chairs, 24% of directors, and 20% of CEOs are women.

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13 Note: Direct comparison between the Leadership Matters dataset collected for this study and the Fiji Women's Rights Movement sample is not possible due to the differences in the organizations covered by the two studies.

Table D.4: Women's Representation in Leadership in Fiji by Organization Type

	Industry Associations	Publicly Listed Companies	State-owned Enterprises	Other Private Sector Organizations
Board Chairs	33% (n = 3)	11% (n = 19)	5% (n = 19)	20% (n = 10)
Directors	23% (n = 39)	24% (n = 113)	12% (n = 82)	20% (n = 48)
CEOs	50% (n = 2)	13% (n = 16)	0% (n = 15)	11% (n = 9)

... = not available, CEO = chief executive officer, n = number (sample size).

Notes: Data are not reported by organization type for women's representation as deputy chairs, executives, or senior leadership personnel due to very small numbers. Although the study includes five categories of organization type, data are only available for four in the Fiji sample.

Table D.5: Women's Representation in Leadership in Fiji by Sector

	Agriculture and fisheries	Diversified	Finance	Media and communications	Manufacturing	Retail	Tourism	Transport and infrastructure	Unspecified	Utilities
Board chairs	0% (n = 8)	0% (n = 6)	18% (n = 11)	40% (n = 5)	13% (n = 8)	0% (n = 1)	0% (n = 2)	0% (n = 4)	25% (n = 4)	0% (n = 2)
Directors	3% (n = 33)	23% (n = 31)	21% (n = 66)	24% (n = 29)	20% (n = 45)	17% (n = 6)	10% (n = 21)	10% (n = 20)	42% (n = 33)	13% (n = 8)
CEOs	0% (n = 6)	0% (n = 3)	10% (n=10)	20% (n=5)	0% (n = 8)	...	100% (n=2)	0% (n=3)	0% (n=2)	0% (n=3)

... = not available, CEO = chief executive officer, n = number (sample size).

Notes: Data are not reported by sector for women's representation as deputy chairs, executives, or senior leadership personnel due to very small numbers. Organizations in the "unspecified" category include chambers of commerce and other peak bodies and state-owned enterprises that did not fit into the sectors identified, such as housing organizations. Although the study covers 12 studies, data are only available for 10 in the Fiji sample.

Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

E. KIRIBATI

With just over 116,000 (ADB 2020a) people spread across 33 atolls and 3.5 million square kilometers of ocean, Kiribati faces significant constraints to private sector development and economic growth. These include the country's remoteness from major markets, high transportation costs, scarce natural resources, and high vulnerability to climate change (ADB 2010).

Women's economic participation and leadership

The labor force participation rate is 61% for women in Kiribati and 73% for men (Government of Kiribati 2019). The private sector is small and employs just 22% of those in paid employment—mainly in retail, fisheries, tourism, and copra production—while the public sector employs 34% (Government of Kiribati, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development 2016). Gender differences in employment between sectors are notable. Women are overrepresented in manufacturing; services, such as wholesale and retail trade; education; and public administration. Men are mainly employed in agriculture, fishing, public administration, and the business sector (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development 2020). The overall unemployment rate in Kiribati in the 2010 census was 31% (Government of Kiribati, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development 2016) but is higher for women—47% overall and increasing to 73% for young women (Government of Kiribati 2019). Like many countries in the region, women in Kiribati do not have the same opportunities as men to take on employment or operate businesses due to their greater share of home-based duties and responsibility for child-rearing.

Opportunities for women in Kiribati are gradually improving, with more women gaining tertiary and professional qualifications. The number of women in public leadership roles is growing. Four women MPs were elected to the 46-seat parliament in the 2020 elections (Pacific Women in Politics n.d.b), and 10 women are now councilors at the local government level. Women hold 54% of secretary positions in government ministries and 15% of CEO positions in SOEs (Government of Kiribati 2019). According to the 2015 census, almost 30% of CEOs in Kiribati were women, and women held 25% of other management positions in the private sector (Government of Kiribati 2015).

Enabling environment for gender equality

Kiribati has ratified CEDAW and has a range of national instruments to support gender equality. The *Te Rau N Te Mwenga* (the Family Peace Act) seeks to strengthen the foundation of family by protecting the rights of all family members and the National Approach to Eliminating Sexual and Gender Based Violence Policy 2011-2021, provides protections for women and children against gender-based violence. The National Policy on Gender Equality and Women's Development 2019-2022 aims to provide "equal opportunities, equal human rights, and equal access to services so that everyone can reach their potential in economic, political, cultural and social life." The policy outlines five priorities, including a priority of improving women's political representation and leadership, focusing on leadership in central and local government and civil society. It also contributes to the achievement of the Kiribati National Development Plan 2016-2019, through a focus on private sector development through greater engagement of women in the business leadership pool (Government of Kiribati 2019). The Women's Development Division of the Ministry of Women, Youth, Sport and Social Affairs has responsibility for implementation and monitoring of gender equality and has eight staff (three permanent and five project funded) (Government of Kiribati, Ministry of Women, Youth, Sport and Social Affairs n.d.). The ministry was allocated A$3,840,705 (1.7%) in the 2021 budget to cover all activities in its portfolio including support for gender equality and sports programs (Government of Kiribati 2021).

Still, high rates of gender-based violence in Kiribati both reflect and reinforce ongoing gender inequalities. Among women between 15 and 49 years of age, 68% report having experienced physical and/or sexual violence by their partner (Pacific Community 2010 cited in Miedema et al 2019).

Women in business leadership

While Kiribati's private sector is small, the country has a strong national policy setting for gender equality and women are increasingly taking on senior leadership roles in business. The sample for Kiribati includes 17 organizations. Although the limited availability of data on workforce and board composition in Kiribati makes it difficult to draw significant conclusions on the representation of women in business, the information available suggests that it compares well to regional averages.

The proportion of women directors in Kiribati is just above the regional average.

All boards in the sample include at least one woman, although no boards have more than 30% women directors (Table E.1).

Table E.1: Board Composition in Kiribati

	Boards (%) (n = 3)	Regional Average
Boards with no women directors	0%	32%
Boards with fewer than 30% women directors	100%	41%
Boards with between 30% and 50% women directors	0%	17%
Boards with gender parity	0%	11%

n = number (sample size).

Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

There are no women board chairs in Kiribati, but women are well represented at the CEO level.

The proportion of women directors in Kiribati (22%) is just above the regional average of 21%. No women in Kiribati hold either board chair or deputy chair positions in sampled organizations (Table E.2), well below both regional averages.

The proportion of women CEOs in Kiribati, at 29%, is well above the regional average of 13% (Table E.3). This number is consistent with the 2015 census, which reported that 30% of

CEOs in Kiribati were women. While the sample is small, this is an encouraging trend that has been maintained over 6 years.

Women's representation in business leadership is highest within Kiribati's SOEs.

Women comprise 25% of SOE directors and 17% of directors of other private sector organizations. Unlike other countries in the study, women are not well represented in industry associations. Instead, the highest proportion of women on boards and as CEOs is in SOEs (Table E.4).

The finance sector has Kiribati's most balanced leadership teams.

Women directors are most prevalent in the finance sector (23%) (Table E.5), a finding consistent with several other countries in the study. Women are also well represented as CEOs in the finance sector, holding two of the three CEO roles. Women also comprise 20% of directors in the transport and infrastructure sector. No data was available for the other sectors in the sample so the picture of leadership by women is incomplete.

Table E.2: Women's Representation in Board Positions in Kiribati

	Number of women	Number of men	Women (%)	Sample size	Regional average (% women)
Board chairs	0	5	0%	n = 5	11%
Deputy chairs	0	3	0%	n = 3	19%
Directors	4	14	22%	n = 18	21%

n = number (sample size).

Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

Table E.3: Women's Representation in Senior Executive and Management Positions in Kiribati

	Number of women	Number of men	Women (%)	Sample size	Regional average (% women)
CEO	2	5	29%	n = 7	13%
CFO/COO	1	0	100%	n = 1	34%
All senior management personnel (including CEOs and CFO/COOs)	8	13	38%	n = 21	29%

CEO = chief executive officer, n = number (sample size).

Notes: Data are not reported by organisation type for women's representation as deputy chairs, executives, or senior leadership personnel due to very small numbers. Although the study includes five categories of organization type, data are only available for three in the Kiribati sample.

Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

Table E.4: Women's Representation in Leadership in Kiribati by Organization Type

	Industry associations	Other private sector organizations	State-owned enterprises
Board Chairs	0% (n = 1)	0% (n = 1)	0% (n = 3)
Directors	…	17% (n = 6)	25% (n = 12)
CEOs	0% (n = 1)	100% (n = 1)	20% (n = 5)

… = not available, CEO = chief executive officer, n = number (sample size).

Notes: Data are not reported by organisation type for women's representation as deputy chairs, executives, or senior leadership personnel due to very small numbers. Although the study includes five categories of organization type, data are only available for three in the Kiribati sample.

Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

Table E.5: Women's Representation in Leadership in Kiribati by Sector

	Finance	Media and communications	Tourism	Transport and infrastructure	Unspecified	Utilities
Board chairs	0% (n = 2)	…	…	0% (n = 1)	0% (n = 2)	0% (n = 1)
Directors	23% (n = 13)	…	…	20% (n = 5)	…	…
CEOs	67% (n = 3)	0% (n = 1)	0% (n = 1)	0% (n = 1)	…	0% (n = 1)

… = not available, CEO = chief executive officer, n = number (sample size).

Notes: Data are not reported by sector for women's representation as deputy chairs, executives, or senior leadership personnel due to very small numbers. Organizations in the "unspecified" category include chambers of commerce and other peak bodies and state-owned enterprises that did not fit into the sectors identified, such as housing organizations. Although the study covers 12 sectors, data are only available for 6 in the Kiribati sample.

Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

F. REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS

The Republic of the Marshall Islands is one of the smallest countries in the Pacific. Its population of 54,600 (ADB 2020a) live on a land area of just 181 square kilometers, spread across five islands, 29 atolls, and 1,150 islets. The Marshall Islands has a narrow economic base, limited drivers of long-term growth and fiscal sustainability, and high vulnerability to severe weather and the impacts of climate change—particularly sea-level rise. The economy depends heavily on the public sector, which generates 43.6% of GDP, while the private sector generates 31.4% (Government of the Marshall Islands 2020). Private sector activity is focused on fisheries, retail services, copra, and tourism. SOEs dominate key economic sectors (Government of the Marshall Islands 2020).

Women's economic participation and leadership

Gender gaps in employment persist across all ages and in both urban and rural areas. The overall labor force participation rate is 39.6%, of which women comprise just 34.8% (Government of the Marshall Islands 2012), and the gender gap in earnings is estimated at 10% (Government of the Marshall Islands and Pacific Community 2018). Only 28% of working-age women are in paid or unpaid work, compared to 51% of men (Government of the Marshall Islands 2012). The private sector employs the largest percentage of people in paid employment (41%), although women comprise only 31.4% of this group (Government of the Marshall Islands 2012). Growth in employment between 1999 and 2011 has favored men over women although the public sector has been more successful in reducing the gender gap in employment. Women in the Marshall Islands are more likely to be producing goods for sale (27% of women compared to 17% of men), while men are more likely to be public or private sector employees (76% of men compared to 65% of women) (ADB 2020b).

Women in the Marshall Islands face additional barriers to their full economic participation, including as entrepreneurs. The particular challenges that constrain women's entrepreneurship include accessing finance, high interest rates for microcredit loans and no dedicated microcredit programs to encourage women entrepreneurs (Government of the Marshall Islands 2019). Additionally, women's economic participation in the Marshall Islands is impeded by high rates of gender-based violence. A 2014 study found that 48% of ever-partnered women reported experiencing physical violence in their lifetime (Government of the Marshall Islands 2014).

The Marshall Islands has a mixed record of women's political participation and leadership. In 2016, it became the first country in the Pacific to elect a woman as head of state, former president, Dr Hilda Heine. After the 2019 elections, the Marshall Islands has two women in its 33-seat *Nitijela* (parliament) (6.1%), including one in cabinet. Women are also represented in other decision-making roles. Women comprise 27% of the Council of Iroji (upper house traditional leaders), 13% of the country's mayors, and 19% of councilors (Government of the Marshall Islands 2014).

Enabling environment for gender equality

The Government of the Marshall Islands has established a strong enabling environment for gender equality and women's economic empowerment. The Marshall Islands has ratified CEDAW. It has also introduced national policy and legislation supporting gender equality, including the Domestic Violence Prevention and Protection Act 2012 that provides protections for women and children against gender-based violence. The National Gender Mainstreaming Policy 2015, outlines priority outcomes across five areas including equitable participation in decision-making. The Gender Equality Act 2019 seeks to address barriers faced by women including the limited job opportunities for women and their underrepresentation in management positions. It requires both public and private sector employers to "actively seek ways to remove gender disparities in the composition of the workforce and promote gender balance, including by special measures" and includes provisions to address maternity leave, sexual harassment, and equal pay (Government of the Marshall Islands 2014). The act also encourages women's entrepreneurship by enshrining equal rights for women to establish enterprises and equal access to markets and finance. The Gender and Development Office of the Ministry of Culture and Internal Affairs is responsible for the implementation and monitoring of gender equality policies and commitments. The office has five employees but insufficient human and financial resources to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and relies heavily on funding from development partners (Government of the Marshall Islands 2018).

Women in business leadership

The Marshall Islands' strong legislative and policy environment for gender equality and women's economic empowerment provides a strong foundation for women's leadership. The sample for the Marshall Islands covers 13 organizations, mostly SOEs, in a range of sectors, including transport,

finance, agriculture, and utilities. Women comprise 23% of the workforce across these organizations,[14] just below the national average for women in paid employment (28%). The data show that, although women's representation on boards is above the regional average, significant and consistent disparities in workforce participation between men and women may be preventing women from taking up more leadership roles within businesses in the formal sector.

Table F.1: Board Composition in the Marshall Islands

	Boards (%) (n = 13)	Regional average
Boards with no women directors	0%	32%
Boards with fewer than 30% women directors	69%	41%
Boards with between 30% and 50% women directors	23%	17%
Boards with gender parity	8%	11%

n = number (sample size).
Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

Women are represented on all boards in the Marshall Islands.

All boards in the Marshall Islands have at least one woman director. 69% of boards had 30% or fewer women directors, 23% had between 30% and 50% women, and one board had more women directors than men directors (Table F.1). The consistent representation of women as board directors across all sectors and organization types in the Marshall Islands is noteworthy and contrasts with the more inconsistent representation identified in most other countries in the study.

The proportion of women on boards in the Marshall Islands is above the regional average, and women hold

chair and deputy chair positions.

The average proportion of women on boards in the Marshall Islands is 25% (Table F.2), above the regional average of 21%, and women hold director positions across all organization types and sectors. Women hold 8% of board chair positions, just under the regional average of 11%. However, women are better represented in deputy chair positions. Women hold 3 out of 11 of these positions (27%), above the regional average of 19%. The higher proportion of women as deputy chairs may increase women's opportunities to take on board chair positions in the future.

The Marshall Islands has no women CEOs.

No women hold a CEO position from the 12 included in the Marshall Islands sample (Table F.3). Consistent with regional trends, women were better represented as CFOs/CEOs and hold well over half (67%) of these positions. Women also hold a third (33%) of all senior management positions, mostly in human resource management.

The representation of women on the boards of state-owned enterprises has not increased, despite government commitments to do so.

Of the organization types included in the sample, SOEs have the lowest proportion of women on their boards, at 24% (Table F.4). However, the number is similar for both industry associations (25%) and other private sector organizations (33%).

The Marshall Islands' 2015 gender mainstreaming policy includes a strategic action to "encourage state-owned and private enterprises to improve and expand women's employment opportunities and to equitably promote women to leadership positions" (Government of the Marshall Islands 2015). Despite this commitment, the proportion of women on SOE boards remains below 30% (Figure F.1).

Table F.2: Women's Representation in Board Positions in the Marshall Islands

	Number of women	Number of men	Women (%)	Sample size	Regional average (% women)
Board chairs	1	12	8%	n = 13	11%
Deputy chairs	3	8	27%	n = 11	19%
Directors	26	79	25%	n = 105	21%

n = number (sample size).
Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

14   Source: Marshall Islands Pacific Country Office, Asian Development Bank.

Women make up a quarter or more of all directors across most sectors in the Marshall Islands.

Women represent between 20% and 33% of all directors across all sectors in the sample, except the communications and media sector (13%) (Table F.5). As already noted, the consistent representation of women across sectors in the Marshall Islands contrasts with most other countries in the study and presents a positive picture of women's leadership opportunities in the country. However, despite the general prevalence of women on boards, they only hold chair positions in the utilities sector.

Figure F.1: Women Directors on State-Owned Enterprise Boards in the Marshall Islands, 2012–2020 (%)
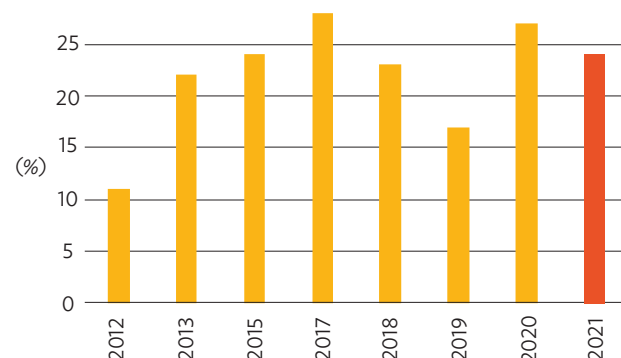
Notes: n = 11 for all years. Data not available for 2014 and 2016. ■ = 2021 data collection methodology differs from previous years.

Sources: 2012–2020: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative. 2021: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative Leadership Matters dataset.

Table F.3: Women's Representation in Senior Executive and Management Positions in the Marshall Islands

	Number of women	Number of men	Women (%)	Sample size	Regional average (% women)
CEO	0	12	0%	n = 12	13%
CFO/COO	8	4	67%	n = 12	34%
All senior management personnel (including CEOs and CFO/COOs)	26	54	33%	n = 80	29%

CEO = chief executive officer, CFO = chief financial officer, COO = chief operating officer, n = number (sample size).

Note: Senior management personnel includes executive leadership (CEOs, CFOs, COOs, and equivalent) and all staff designated manager, department head, or equivalent.

Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

Table F.4: Women's Representation in Leadership in the Marshall Islands by Organization Type

	Industry associations	Other private sector organizations	State-owned enterprises
Board Chairs	0% (n = 1)	0% (n = 1)	9% (n = 11)
Directors	25% (n = 4)	33% (n = 9)	24% (n = 92)
CEOs	…	0% (n = 1)	0% (n = 11)

… = not available, CEO = chief executive officer. n = number (sample size).

Notes: Data are not reported by organization type for women's representation as deputy chairs, executives, or senior leadership personnel due to very small numbers. Although the study includes five categories of organization type, data are only available for three in the Marshall Islands sample.

Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

Table F.5: Women's Representation in Leadership in the Marshall Islands by Sector

	Agriculture and fisheries	Finance	Media and communications	Tourism	Transport and infrastructure	Unspecified	Utilities
Board chairs	0% (n = 1)	0% (n = 2)	0% (n = 1)	0% (n = 1)	0% (n = 3)	0% (n = 1)	25% (n = 4)
Directors	22% (n = 9)	28% (n = 18)	13% (n = 8)	33% (n = 9)	20% (n = 25)	25% (n = 4)	28% (n = 32)
CEOs	0% (n = 1)	0% (n = 2)	0% (n = 1)	0% (n = 1)	0% (n = 3)	…	0% (n = 4)

… = not available, CEO = chief executive officer, n = number (sample size).

Notes: Data are not reported by sector for women's representation as deputy chairs, executives, or senior leadership personnel due to very small numbers. Organizations in the "unspecified" category include chambers of commerce and other peak bodies and state-owned enterprises that did not fit into the sectors identified, such as housing organizations. Although the study covers 12 sectors, data are only available for 7 in the Marshall Islands sample.

Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

G. NAURU

Nauru, a single island of just 21 square kilometers, has a population of around 11,600 (ADB 2020a). With few resources, government income is mostly derived from the proceeds of a regional processing center[15] and revenue from fishing licenses. Nauru is heavily reliant on imports and is the highest recipient of aid as a percentage of GDP in the Pacific (United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific [UNESCAP] 2015).

The public sector is Nauru's largest employer. Almost half (43%) of all employed people work for the government, 29% for SOEs, and 21% for the regional processing center (UNESCAP 2015). With most people in waged employment in the public sector, both the private and informal sectors in Nauru are very small. Private sector businesses and employees are concentrated in construction, security, cleaning, baking, restaurants, and retail (UNESCAP 2015).

Women's economic participation and leadership

The labor force participation rate for women is low (49.3%) compared with men (78.9%). Men are better represented across all labor force categories, while women were almost seven times more likely to be engaged in home duties than men (Government of Nauru 2011).

Sexual harassment and discrimination in the workplace, lack of pay equity, and limited social services are among the key barriers to women's economic participation in Nauru (Government of Nauru 2014a). Employment options in Nauru mirror traditional gender roles—with women in lower-paid clerical and service-oriented jobs and men holding more professional or technical positions—resulting in an imbalance of earning power (Pacific Community 2015).

Nauru is a matrilineal society, and as such there is awareness of women's rights and a degree of openness to women's advancement. However, women are still in the minority in leadership positions. They hold 2 out of 19 (10.5%) seats in parliament, and only 3 women have been elected to parliament since independence in 1968 (Pacific Women in Politics 2021). Additionally, the prevalence of gender-based violence undermines women's leadership and economic opportunities. Over 48% of women report having experienced physical and/ or sexual violence by a partner in their lifetime (Government of Nauru 2014b).

Enabling environment for gender equality

The Government of Nauru has ratified CEDAW and launched a National Women's Policy in 2014. The policy articulates six goals to achieve gender equality, including heightened participation of women in decision-making and leadership and the improved economic status of women, including workplace equality with men (Government of Nauru 2014a). Strategies to achieve these goals include reducing gender disparities, especially in management and leadership roles across the public sector and SOEs, and introducing sex discrimination legislation addressing employment and sexual harassment. The Department of Women's and Social Affairs of the Ministry of Disabilities, Health, Internal Affairs and Women and Social Development Affairs is responsible for implementation and monitoring of gender equality policy and commitments.

Women in business leadership

Women's representation in business leadership in Nauru is low compared to other Pacific island countries, consistent with Nauru's levels of women's representation in political leadership. The sample for Nauru is small, consisting of just nine organizations. However, the findings show that, despite some exceptions, women's representation in senior management and on boards is lower in Nauru than the regional averages.

Women are underrepresented on boards in Nauru.

Across the sample, the proportion of women on boards in Nauru is only 12%, which is significantly lower than the regional average of 21%. Two-thirds of boards (67%) have no women directors at all and a further 11% have less than 30% women directors (Table G.1). Out of the sample of nine boards, two boards had between 30% and 50% women.

Women are well represented as board chairs in Nauru despite their low overall representation as directors.

In the Nauru sample, women hold 2 out of 10 (20%) board chair positions, almost double the regional average of 11% (Table G.2). Both organizations with women board chairs also have higher rates of women directors overall, suggesting that more gender-equal boards create opportunities for women to take on board chair roles.

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15   A facility established by the Government of Australia in 2012 to facilitate the receiving and processing of asylum seekers and other "irregular entrants to the region" (Parliament of Australia n.d.).

Table G.1: Board Composition in Nauru

	Boards (%) (n = 9)	Regional average
Boards with no women directors	67%	32%
Boards with fewer than 30% women directors	11%	41%
Boards with between 30% and 50% women directors	22%	17%
Boards with gender parity	0%	11%

n = number (sample size).
Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

Women are underrepresented as CEOs in Nauru.

It is difficult to draw generalized conclusions from the limited data available on the composition of senior management teams in Nauru (Table G.3). No women CEOs were identified in the Nauru sample, well below the regional average of 13%. A small number of women hold other key senior management positions, including CFO and COO, which is encouraging as these roles are often a springboard to CEO positions.

State-owned enterprises offer Nauru's best opportunity to increase women's business leadership.

The vast majority (90%) of organizations in the sample are state-owned enterprises (SOEs). The proportion of women directors for SOEs is 12% (Table G.4). This is consistent with the regional trend of underrepresentation of women on SOE boards. However, Nauru departs from regional trends in the representation of women as SOE board chairs, which is almost double the regional average. In the Nauru sample, 2 out of 10 board chair positions are held by women, and both are within SOEs.

The proportion of women on boards is highest in Nauru's communications and media sector.

The media and communications sector has Nauru's most diverse boards, including a woman board chair (Table G.5). However, in several sectors, women are not represented on boards at all. The traditionally male-dominated sectors of transport and resources have 18% and 9% women directors, respectively. Further, women hold 50% of board chair positions within the resources sector. Women are not represented at all on the boards of utilities—contrasting with the other Pacific Island countries in the dataset, where women are well represented in this sector.

Table G.2: Women's Representation in Board Positions in Nauru

	Number of women	Number of men	Women (%)	Sample size	Regional average (% women)
Board chairs	2	8	20%	n=10	11%
Deputy chairs	0	2	0%	n=2	19%
Directors	5	37	12%	n=42	21%

n = number (sample size).
Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

Table G.3: Women's Representation in Senior Executive and Management Positions in Nauru

	Number of women	Number of men	Women (%)	Sample size	Regional average (% women)
CEO	0	2	0%	n = 2	13%
CFO/COO	1	0	100%	n = 1	34%
All senior management personnel (including CEOs and CFO/COOs)	1	2	33%	n = 3	29%

CEO = chief executive officer, CFO = chief financial officer, COO = chief operating officer, n = number (sample size).
Note: Senior management personnel includes executive leadership (CEOs, CFOs, COOs, and equivalent) and all staff designated manager, department head, or equivalent.
Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

Table G.4: Women's Representation in Leadership in Nauru by Organization Type

	Industry associations	State-owned enterprises
Board Chairs	0% (n = 1)	22% (n = 9)
Directors	…	12% (n = 42)
CEOs	…	0% (n = 2)

… = not available, CEO = chief executive officer. n = number (sample size).

Notes: Data are not reported by organization type for women's representation as deputy chairs, executives, or senior leadership personnel due to very small numbers. Although the study covers five categories of organization type, data are only available for two in the Nauru sample.

Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset

Table G.5: Women's Representation in Leadership in Nauru by Sector

	Diversified	Media and communications	Resources	Transport and infrastructure	Unspecified	Utilities
Board chairs	0% (n = 1)	100% (n = 1)	50% (n = 2)	0% (n = 2)	0% (n = 1)	0% (n = 3)
Directors	0% (n = 3)	40% (n = 5)	9% (n = 11)	18% (n = 11)	…	0% (n = 12)
CEOs	…	…	…	0% (n = 1)	…	0% (n = 1)

… = not available, CEO = chief executive officer, n = number (sample size).

Notes: Data are not reported by sector for women's representation as deputy chairs, executives, or senior leadership personnel due to very small numbers. Diversified organizations conduct business activities in multiple sectors. Organizations in the "unspecified" category include chambers of commerce and other peak bodies and state-owned enterprises that did not fit into the sectors identified, such as housing organizations. Although the study covers 12 sectors, data are only available for 6 in the Nauru sample.

Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

H. NIUE

Niue, a self-governing territory in free association with New Zealand, is one of the world's smallest countries. Over the past half century, it has experienced the largest population decline of any country in the world—from 5,194 people in 1966 (ADB 2020c) to around 1,900 in 2019 (ADB 2020a). Around 30,000 Niueans live in New Zealand (Government of New Zealand 2018). Its geographic isolation and narrow economic base make Niue particularly vulnerable to economic, climatic, and social shocks.

Niue has a small private sector. 38% of Niue residents aged 15 or older are employed in the public sector, compared with just 19% in the private sector (Government of Niue 2019). Tourism is the main driver of economic growth, accounting for an estimated 28% of Niue's GDP in 2019 (Pacific Tourism Organisation 2020), and brings six visitors for every resident—one of the world's highest tourist–to–population ratios (ADB 2020c).

Women's economic participation and leadership

Niue has gender gaps in overall labor force participation, and gendered differences in occupations and industries of employment. According to the 2017 census, the overall labor force participation rate is 69% (Government of Niue 2019) but there is a gender gap: 60.6% of women are in the labor force compared with 77.4% of men (Government of Niue 2019). 14.7% of women report their main activity is home duties, compared with just 3.5% of men (Government of Niue 2019). Women were most likely to be professionals (20%) or service and sales workers (19%), while men tended to undertake craft-related work (21%) or were managers, legislators, and senior officials (19%) (Government of Niue 2019). 14% of women were employed as managers, legislators, and senior officials (Government of Niue 2019). There are also gender divisions by industry. Men are overrepresented in public administration, defence, and social security; construction; and agriculture, forestry, and fishing, while women are overrepresented in administrative and support activities, education, and accommodation and food services (Government of Niue 2019).

Women have been part of parliament in Niue since the establishment of the assembly in 1974. Five women members of parliament comprise 25% of the Niue Assembly in 2021 (Pacific Women in Politics n.d.c.), which along with Cook Islands, is the highest level of representation of women achieved to date in Pacific parliaments (Pacific Women in Politics n.d.c.). However, women are underrepresented at senior levels of the public service, accounting for 11% of these roles in 2016 (PIFS 2016).

Enabling environment for gender equality

Niue has little policy and legislation to support gender equality and women's empowerment (Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development 2017). It ratified CEDAW only through New Zealand, and the constitution does not provide protection against gender-based discrimination (Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development 2017). Niue does not have specific labor provisions for women (United Nations 2019). A second draft of a family bill was submitted to the Government of Niue in 2016 and sets a minimum age for marriage, protections for children and de facto partners, abolishes "matrimonial offences," and provides a legislative framework to respond to domestic violence (Pacific Women 2017b). The Niue National Strategic Plan 2009-2013 committed to implementing a national policy on gender by 2013 (Government of Niue 2009). The draft national policy examines factors contributing to limited awareness of gender equality including resource constraints, lack of data, and insufficient systems for coordination and monitoring (Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development 2017). Responsibility for Niue's gender equality policy and commitments sits with the Ministry of Social Affairs.

Women in business leadership

Despite Niue's extremely small private sector and limited policy and legislation to support gender equality, the limited data available for this study—just 9 organizations are included in the sample—indicates high levels of women's representation in business leadership.

Data on private sector leadership in Niue are extremely limited.

Data on the representation of women on boards in Niue are drawn from just three organizations, one with no women directors, one with fewer than 30%, and one with between 30 and 50% (Table H.1).

Women make up a higher proportion of directors in Niue (29%) than the regional average (21%). No woman board chairs were observed in the sample. However, the single deputy chair position represented in the dataset is a woman (Table H.2).

Table H.1: Board Composition in Niue

	Boards (%) (n = 3)	Regional Average
Boards with no women directors	33%	32%
Boards with fewer than 30% women directors	33%	41%
Boards with between 30% and 50% women directors	33%	17%
Boards with gender parity	0%	11%

n = number (sample size).
Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

Women are underrepresented as CEOs in Niue but are engaged as senior management personnel.

Just one of nine CEOs in the Niue sample is a woman. She is one of two women that comprise all senior management personnel identified (Table H.3).

Some progress may be being made in women's representation on Niue's SOE boards.

2016 data indicate that women held just 3% of seats on SOE boards (PIFS 2016), well below the 14% indicated in the dataset compiled for this study (Table H.4). This may point to progress in this area.

Women play important roles in business in Niue.

In the Niue Chamber of Commerce, 40% of directors are women. The chamber of commerce is a representative organization, so the high level of women's involvement on its board suggests women play key roles in the private sector. No women are part of the board in the agriculture and fisheries sector (Table H.5).

Table H.2: Women's Representation in Board Positions in Niue

	Number of women	Number of men	Women (%)	Sample size	Regional average (% women)
Board chairs	0	1	0%	n = 1	11%
Deputy chairs	1	0	100%	n = 1	19%
Directors	5	12	29%	n = 17	21%

n = number (sample size).
Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

Table H.3: Women's Representation in Senior Executive and Management Positions in Niue

	Number of women	Number of men	Women (%)	Sample size	Regional average (% women)
CEO	1	8	11%	n = 9	13%
CFO/COO	...	...	...	...	34%
All senior management personnel (including CEOs and CFO/COOs)	2	8	20%	n = 10	29%

... = not available, CEO = chief executive officer, CFO = chief financial officer, COO = chief operating officer, n = number (sample size).
Note: Senior management personnel includes executive leadership (CEOs, CFOs, COOs, and equivalent) and all staff designated manager, department head, or equivalent.
Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

Table H.4: Women's Representation in Leadership in Niue by Organization Type

	Industry associations	State-owned enterprises
Board Chairs	0% (n = 1)	…
Directors	40% (n = 10)	14% (n = 7)
CEOs	100% (n = 1)	0% (n = 8)

… = not available, CEO = chief executive officer, n = number (sample size).

Notes: Data are not reported by organization type for women's representation as deputy chairs, executives, or senior leadership personnel due to very small numbers. Although the study includes five categories of organization type, data are only available for two in the Niue sample.

Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

Table H.5: Women's Representation in Leadership in Niue by Sector

	Agriculture and fisheries	Diversified	Media and communications	Retail	Services	Unspecified
Board chairs	…	…	…	…	…	0% (n = 1)
Directors	0% (n = 3)	…	25% (n = 4)	…	…	40% (n = 10)
CEOs	0% (n = 1)	0% (n = 1)	0% (n = 2)	0% (n = 1)	0% (n = 1)	33% (n = 3)

… = not available, CEO = chief executive officer, n = number (sample size).

Notes: Data are not reported by sector for women's representation as deputy chairs, executives, or senior leadership personnel due to very small numbers. "Diversified" organizations conduct business activities in multiple sectors. Organizations in the "unspecified" category include chambers of commerce and other peak bodies and state-owned enterprises that did not fit into the sectors identified, such as housing organizations. Although the study covers 12 sectors, data are only available for 6 in the Niue sample.

Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

I. PALAU

Palau is an archipelago of over 500 islands and a population of 17,500 (ADB 2020a). Its economy is highly dependent on the tourism sector, which generates around 40% of GDP (ADB 2020d), and public administration (ADB 2017). Before COVID-19, Palau had one of the highest per capita incomes in the Pacific, at just over $16,000. However, the economy is expected to contract 7.8% in 2021 (ADB 2021a). According to the 2015 census, 82.8% of the adult population was in paid employment. The private sector employed almost half of the workforce (48%) and the public sector 30%.

Women's economic participation and leadership

Women make up 45% of the workforce in Palau, and the proportion of women employed in the public sector (43%) is slightly higher than in the private sector (38%) (Government of Palau 2015). Although women are well represented in the workforce in Palau, they comprise the majority of those in unpaid employment (72%) (Government of Palau 2015). Of those in unpaid employment, 88% of women identified as "unpaid family worker helping with basic household duties".

Many women in Palau struggle to manage multiple caring responsibilities, which can limit opportunities to take on top-level leadership roles (Government of Palau 2008). Gender-based violence is a significant impediment to women's full and equal rights. One in four women in Palau has experienced physical and/or sexual violence by a partner in their lifetime (Government of Palau, Ministry of Health 2014).

As a matriarchal and matrilineal society, women in Palau have traditionally held positions of power and respect (Government of Palau 2008). Currently, three out of 29 members of parliament (6.9%) are women, including the vice-president (Pacific Women in Politics 2021). Women are well-represented in other leadership positions in Palau, holding 41% of public and private sector management positions (Government of Palau 2015). Women are also equally represented as managers in commercial operations, production, hospitality, retail, and other services within the private sector, where they hold 208 out of 415 management positions (Government of Palau 2015).

Enabling environment for gender equality

Palau has enshrined equal rights in its constitution. Still, it remains one of a few countries in the world to have signed but not ratified the CEDAW. The country has developed national legislation and policy to promote gender equality, including the *Family Protection Act 2012*, providing protections for women and children against gender-based violence, and the *National Gender Mainstreaming Policy 2018* that ensures "public policies and services benefit women as well as men and to take additional measures to remove barriers to gender equality". The policy outlines four strategic objectives including equal participation in decision-making in all areas of life and equal opportunity to earn an income (Government of Palau 2018). The policy commits to "adopt measures to ensure gender-balance in senior leadership/managerial positions in the government and on boards of state-owned businesses". However, there are gaps in the legislative cover for women in the workforce as current provisions, such as maternity leave, only apply to women employed by the national government, and no legislation prohibits sexual harassment in the workplace. After a reorganization of government ministries in 2021, responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of Palau's gender equality policies and commitments now sits with the Bureau of Domestic Affairs within the Ministry of State. Previously, responsibility for gender equality sat with the Bureau of Aging and Gender in the Ministry of Community and Cultural Affairs. Budget allocations for fiscal year (FY)[16] 2019 show $377,000 was allocated to for support to gender and aging, representing 0.79% of the total budget (Government of Palau 2019).

Women in business leadership

Palau has strong cultural traditions of women as leaders, high rates of workforce participation, and women hold leadership positions in both the public and private sectors. While the sample of eight organizations is small, the findings reaffirm the 2015 census data, which reported that women hold a range of leadership roles, including board chairs, directors, and CEO positions, and the proportion of women in business leadership in Palau is among the highest in the sampled countries.

Women are well-represented on boards in Palau.

60% of boards in Palau have 30% or more women directors, and only 20% of boards have no women at all (Table I.1). The average proportion of women on boards in Palau is 38%, well above the regional average of 21%.

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16   Palau's fiscal year ends 30 September.

Table I.1: Board Composition in Palau

	Boards (%) (n = 5)	Regional average
Boards with no women directors	20%	32%
Boards with fewer than 30% women directors	20%	41%
Boards with between 30% and 50% women directors	20%	17%
Boards with gender parity	40%	11%

n = number (sample size).
Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

Women in Palau hold both board chair and deputy chair roles.

Women are well represented in board chair and deputy chair roles, holding 20% of board chair and 33% of deputy chair positions (Table I.2). Similar to other countries in the sample, women in Palau commonly take up these leadership positions within industry associations, particularly in the tourism sector, where women hold both board chair and deputy chair positions (Table I.4).

Women are well represented as CEOs in Palau.

Women hold 29% of CEO positions, more than double the regional average, and are well represented in the Palau sample for senior management positions, comprising a third of all senior management personnel (Table I.3).

Women are represented in leadership positions across all organization types in Palau but have the highest representation in other private sector organizations.

Within the sample, women comprise 67% of directors of other private sector organizations and 57% of industry associations but only 21% of directors of SOEs (Table I.4). Within SOEs, the representation of women varies. State-owned financial institutions have parity on their boards, but there are no women on the boards of utilities. The strong representation of women in leadership positions within financial institutions is consistent with a trend observed across other countries in the study.

Women have reached the highest levels of leadership in Palau in the finance sector.

Women hold 29% (two out of seven) of CEO positions in the Palau sample. Both positions are within financial institutions (Table I.5), consistent with other Pacific Island countries in this study, where women are well represented in CEO and senior management positions in the finance sector. Women represent

Table I.2: Women's Representation in Board Positions in Palau

	Number of women	Number of men	Women (%)	Sample size	Regional average (% women)
Board chairs	1	4	20%	n=5	11%
Deputy chairs	1	2	33%	n=3	19%
Directors	9	15	38%	n= 24	21%

n = number (sample size).
Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

Table I.3: Women's Representation in Senior Executive and Management Positions in Palau

	Number of women	Number of men	Women (%)	Sample size	Regional average (% women)
CEO	2	5	29%	n = 7	13%
CFO/COO	0	1	0%	n = 1	34%
All senior management personnel (including CEOs and CFO/COOs)	3	6	33%	n = 9	29%

CEO = chief executive officer, CFO = chief financial officer, COO = chief operating officer, n = number (sample size).
Note: Senior management personnel includes executive leadership (CEOs, CFOs, COOs, and equivalent) and all staff designated manager, department head, or equivalent.
Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

Table I.4: Women's Representation in Leadership in Palau by Organization Type

	Industry associations	Other private sector organizations	State-owned enterprises
Board Chairs	100% (n = 1)	0% (n = 1)	0% (n = 3)
Directors	57% (n = 7)	67% (n=3)	21% (n=14)
CEOs	0% (n = 1)	50% (n = 2)	25% (n = 4)

CEO = chief executive officer, n = number (sample size).

Notes: Data are not reported by organization type for women's representation as deputy chairs, executives, or senior leadership personnel due to very small numbers. Although the study covers five categories of organization type, data are only available for three in the Palau sample.

Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

Table I.5: Women's Representation in Leadership in Palau by Sector

	Diversified	Finance	Media and communications	Tourism	Unspecified	Utilities
Board chairs	…	0% (n = 2)	0% (n = 2)	100% (n = 1)	…	…
Directors	…	50% (n = 8)	20% (n = 5)	57% (n = 7)	…	0% (n = 4)
CEOs	0% (n = 1)	100% (n = 2)	0% (n = 2)	…	0% (n = 1)	0% (n = 1)

… = not available, CEO = chief executive officer, n = number (sample size).

Notes: Data are not reported by sector for women's representation as deputy chairs, executives, or senior leadership personnel, due to very small numbers. Diversified organizations conduct business activities in multiple sectors. Organizations in the "unspecified" category include chambers of commerce and other peak bodies and state-owned enterprises that did not fit into the sectors identified, such as housing organizations. Although the study covers 12 sectors, data are only available for 6 in the Palau sample.

Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

33% of senior management positions across all organizations in the sample. Finance and tourism are the only two sectors with gender parity or greater on boards.

J. PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Papua New Guinea (PNG) has a population of approximately 9.3 million (ADB 2020a) and is the largest economy among the ADB's Pacific developing member countries. A majority of the labor force is involved in agriculture, fisheries, and forestry. Approximately 85% of the population lives in rural areas and depends on subsistence production for their livelihoods and food (Government of Australia 2020). The capital-intensive resources sector employs fewer people but is the main contributor to the country's export earnings and GDP (World Bank 2021b). In 2021, government expenditure accounted for 20% of GDP (O'Neill 2021). SOEs play an important role in the economy, particularly in the finance, utilities, and infrastructure sectors.

Women's economic participation and leadership

Women and men in PNG have similar labor force participation rates, but women are overrepresented in the informal sector. Labor force participation is 61% for women and 62% for men (Government of Papua New Guinea, National Statistical Office [NSO] 2011). In urban areas, 64% of men and boys are in a wage job, compared with 39% of women and girls (Government of Papua New Guinea, NSO 2011). In rural areas, 7% of women and 11% of men are in a wage job (Government of Papua New Guinea, NSO 2011). Overall, 46% of women work in the informal sector, compared with just 15% of men (Government of Papua New Guinea, NSO 2021, cited in ADB 2016c). 25% of an estimated 49,500 small- to medium-sized enterprises in PNG are women-owned (ADB 2018b).

Women's representation in political leadership in PNG is among the lowest in the world. The country has had just seven women parliamentarians since its independence in 1975. In the 2017 election, a record 5% of candidates were women, but none were elected (Baker 2017). There have been ongoing attempts to implement reserved seats as a way to increase women's representation, but none have been successful. For example, the equality and participation bill, which was passed in 2011, sought to reserve 22 of the 111 Parliamentary seats for women. However, the enabling legislation was not passed prior to the 2012 elections (ADB 2018b). In June 2021, the Attorney General announced in-principle approval from the National Executive Council for one reserved seat for women for each of the five regions (United Nations Development Programme

2021). PNG's trend of few women in political leadership is also reflected in the public service. In 2018, just 2 of PNG's 14 secretary-level positions were held by women, and women held just 32% of second-tier and 34% of third-tier senior executive leadership public service roles (ADB 2018b).

Enabling environment for gender equality

PNG has developed legislation and policy to support gender equality and ratified CEDAW in 1995. The PNG Constitution 1975 calls for equality of rights, privileges, obligations, and duties, irrespective of sex. However, it also "prioritizes cultural traditions," (Lowy Institute n.d.) many of which shape gendered social norms. PNG implemented a National Policy for Women and Gender Equality 2011–2015 which aimed to create an enabling policy environment for gender equality and "to empower women and to transform gender relations in all aspects of work and in all levels of government, including the wider society". The government has committed to reducing the prevalence of gender-based violence, which is high, including violence resulting from accusations of sorcery. 80% of men have physically or sexually assaulted their partners in their lifetime (International Womens Development Agency n.d.). The Papua New Guinea Development Strategic Plan recognizes that "PNG cannot reach its potential if inequality [between men and women] continues to exist" (Government of Papua New Guinea 2010). The National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender Based Violence 2016-2025 and the 2015 Sorcery and Witchcraft Accusation Related Violence National Action Plan sets out a whole-of-government framework to respond to gender-based violence, with objectives related to governance, data and evidence, supports for survivors of violence, and prevention (Government of Papua New Guinea 2016).

PNG does not have a dedicated ministry focused on women. The Office for the Development of Women sits under the Department of Community Development and Religion. Government investment in gender issues has declined considerably over time, with funding for gender issues to the department falling 20% between 2011 and 2016 (ADB 2018b). The 2021 budget allocated K102 million to community and culture, which equates to 0.5% of total expenditure (Deloitte 2021).[17]

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17   Author's calculations.

Box 9: Leading the Charge to Increase Women in Business Leadership in Papua New Guinea

Papua New Guinea (PNG) currently has no women in its national parliament and is often perceived as having few opportunities for women to take on leadership roles. While progress towards a higher representation of women in politics has been slow, significant work is being done to increase women's leadership in the business world. Two organizations in particular—the PNG Institute of Directors (PNGID) and Kumul Consolidated Holdings (KCH) (the holding company for PNG's state-owned enterprises)—are spearheading campaigns to increase the representation of women in business leadership in recognition of the benefits of board diversity on performance.

Under former president Anthony Yauieb's leadership, PNGID launched a board gender diversity initiative in 2020 to improve corporate governance by addressing gender gaps on boards. Anthony says PNG needs more women "in positions of leadership in the corporate sector, public sector, and especially in public office," and that "the centerpiece of [the Institute of Director's] proposed strategic roadmap is a target of 30% representation of women on boards by 2030."

Anthony decided to lead by example and stepped down from his role as president to create more opportunities for women to take on leadership roles at the PNGID. In May 2021, the first woman president, Sharon Kupp-Tengdui, was elected. Sharon will lead a board comprised of 60% women, including the vice-president and treasurer. Anthony describes it as "a proud and exciting moment for the institute to have its first woman president." He explains that "Sharon was previously vice president and was ready to take over the leadership of the institute. I am delighted too that members of the institute have recognized the capabilities of a cadre of young women emerging leaders."

Under the new board, PNGID recently conducted their first women's only event that provided a forum for aspiring women directors to learn about the values, attributes, skills, and competencies required for directorships and how to raise the profile of their candidacy. This will be the first in a number of events planned for the next few years to pursue opportunities for positive change.

Another leader taking action to increase the number of women in business leadership in PNG is Isikeli Taureka, Managing Director of KCH. Isikeli observes that "in my experience generally in the PNG oil, gas, and banking sector is that women outshine the men in many instances." To create more leadership opportunities for women, KCH has set a target of 30% representation of women in senior management and board director roles within the next 5 years.

To meet this target, KCH has adopted a transparent, skills-based director selection process and undertaken a targeted recruitment drive to expand the pool of women candidates available for upcoming board vacancies. KCH has developed a diversity and inclusion policy to build a more inclusive workplace and is also developing a program of support for new women directors to prepare them to take on, and succeed, in these roles. The program includes director training, board observer opportunities, and ongoing support and mentoring from experienced directors. According to Isikeli, "this will enable [KCH] to have our list of pre-approved women candidates to be well prepared and be match fit as a director for the next cycle of board terms in 2022 and 2023."

Arising from a 1990 United Nations resolution, the ratio of 30% representation by women on boards and senior management has become a widely accepted target, backed by a global movement advocating for a critical mass of women in leadership roles to bring about positive and lasting change. Both PNGID and KCH believe that businesses in PNG will benefit from having more women in leadership and that increasing the visibility of women leaders will be crucial to improving societal attitudes towards women's leadership capabilities. Their work to build talent pipelines for women, including identifying and developing high potential young women, will be critical to successfully creating more opportunities for women to take on leadership roles.

Sharon has welcomed the recent work of KCH to increase women's representation based on amendments to the legislation governing SOEs that require a skills-based and transparent process for director appointments. PNGID will work actively to develop and promote an emerging cadre of women leaders through their board gender initiative. On a more personal note, Sharon acknowledged the important role that male champions have played in her career by believing in her ability and providing the necessary support and encouragement for her to pursue opportunities. She notes "there is a bright future for women in business leadership, but in order to have a future, men currently holding positions of senior leadership in business will need to champion this future."

Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, based on *PNG Haus Bung.* "PNG Institute of Directors Appoints First Woman President of the Institute." 20 May 2021; and author's interviews (via email) with Anthony Yauieb, former president of the PNG Institute of Directors, Sharon Kupp-Tengdui, president of the PNG Institute of Directors, and Isikeli Taureka, managing director of Kumul Consolidated Holdings.

Table J.1: Board Composition in Papua New Guinea

	Boards (%) (n = 45)	Regional average
Boards with no women directors	44%	32%
Boards with fewer than 30% women directors	29%	41%
Boards with between 30% and 50% women directors	18%	17%
Boards with gender parity	9%	11%

n = number (sample size).
Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

Women in business leadership

The 50-organization sample for PNG provides a solid basis for an analysis of women's business leadership. It includes 12 publicly listed companies, 13 SOEs, 8 industry associations, and 17 other private sector organizations. The findings show that, despite similar levels of workforce participation, women are underrepresented in business leadership in PNG—consistent with women's lower levels of participation in the formal economy. However, the extent of women's underrepresentation is not as profound as in politics.

Women are under-represented on boards in PNG.

There are no women directors on 44% of PNG's boards, and just 9% have gender parity. On both measures, PNG performs worse than the regional averages (Table J.1).

Women are particularly underrepresented in board chair positions in PNG.

Women comprise 19% of directors in PNG, just below the regional average of 21% (Table J.2). Women are just 4% of board chairs, also lower than the regional average of 11%. The sample for deputy chair positions in PNG is much smaller but finds that women hold 18% of these positions—roughly aligned with the regional average. This finding is significant, since deputy chair positions can be an important pathway to board leadership.

The level of women's representation on boards in the sample for this study is much higher than their representation as directors of the approximately 60,000 companies registered with the PNG Investment Promotion Authority. Women are just 4% of directors and 4% of shareholders of these entities, which include family businesses, sole director companies, and other structures.[18]

Women are underrepresented in PNG's senior executive and management positions.

Just 2 of 44 CEO positions in the PNG sample were held by women, as were 2 of 26 CFO/COO roles (Table J.3). However, in the organizations sampled women were found to comprise 17% of senior management personnel (including CEOs and CFO/COOs) across a diverse range of roles, including risk and compliance oversight, human resources, corporate services, strategic planning, and asset management. The finding of 17% aligns with other available data, including a World Economic Forum (2021) report that found PNG women comprise 18% of legislators, senior officials, and managers and that 14% of firms have women managers.

PNG's state-owned enterprises could promote and increase gender diversity in leadership.

There is considerable variation in women's levels of representation in leadership by organization type in PNG. Based on the 13 SOEs where data were available, women comprise

Table J.2: Women's Representation in Board Positions in Papua New Guinea

	Number of women	Number of men	Women (%)	Sample size	Regional average (% women)
Board chairs	2	44	4%	n = 46	11%
Deputy chairs	2	9	18%	n = 11	19%
Directors	54	230	19%	n = 284	21%

n = number (sample size).
Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

18   Source: Investment Promotion Authority, Papua New Guinea (business registry data).

Table J.3: Women's Representation in Senior Executive and Management Positions in Papua New Guinea

	Number of women	Number of men	Women (%)	Sample size	Regional average (% women)
CEO	2	42	5%	n = 44	13%
CFO/COO	2	24	8%	n = 26	34%
All senior management personnel (including CEOs and CFO/COOs)	23	116	17%	n = 139	29%

CEO = chief executive officer, CFO = chief financial officer, COO = chief operating officer, n = number (sample size).
Note: Senior management personnel includes executive leadership (CEOs, CFOs, COOs, and equivalent) and all staff designated manager, department head, or equivalent.
Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

Table J.4: Women's Representation in Leadership in Papua New Guinea by Organization Type

	Industry associations	Other private sector organizations	Publicly listed companies	State-owned enterprises
Board Chairs	25% (n = 8)	0% (n = 13)	0% (n = 12)	0% (n = 13)
Directors	30% (n = 56)	21% (n = 81)	23% (n = 66)	6% (n = 81)
CEOs	40% (n = 5)	0% (n = 15)	0% (n = 12)	0% (n = 12)

CEO = chief executive officer, n = number (sample size).
Notes: Data are not reported by organization type for women's representation as deputy chairs, executives, or senior leadership personnel due to very small numbers. Although the study includes five categories of organization type, data are only available for four in the Papua New Guinea sample.
Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

just 6% of directors, far lower than the 30% of director positions held by women in industry associations, 23% in publicly listed companies, and 21% in other private sector organizations (Table J.4).

Notably, the only women board chairs in PNG are in industry associations. Similarly, both organizations with women CEOs are either industry associations or peak bodies. One of these, the PNG Institute of Directors, has a woman in both the chair and deputy chair positions. In industry associations, publicly listed companies, and other private organizations, women have far more representation in leadership than they do in the country's SOEs. Indeed, if SOE boards were excluded from the sample, women would comprise 24% of directors in PNG—above the regional average.

Women have historically been underrepresented on SOE boards in PNG (Figure J.1). The country is working to develop a robust private sector which will include reforming SOEs to strengthen their governance, accountability, and transparency and make them more productive, competitive, and well-governed. Kumul Consolidated Holdings, PNG's SOE holding company, recognizes the significant opportunities provided by increased women on boards to improve organizational performance and better represent the community SOEs serve. It has set a target of 30% women directors for the nine boards in its portfolio. The PNG Institute of Directors has also advocated for the consideration of targets or quotas for women directors in SOEs and publicly listed companies.[19]

Women are represented at higher levels of leadership in PNG's peak bodies, and in the retail, finance, and tourism sectors.

Like most other Pacific countries included in the sample, there are strong trends in women's representation by sector in PNG. Women have more leadership representation in chambers of commerce and other peak bodies and the finance, retail, and tourism sectors (Table J.5). Women are underrepresented on boards in the agriculture and fisheries, media and

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19   PNG Institute of Directors released a consultation draft of a proposed strategic action plan on gender gaps on boards in PNG in 2020.

Table J.5: Women's Representation in Leadership in Papua New Guinea by Sector

	Agriculture and fisheries	Diversified	Finance	Media and communications	Resources	Retail	Tourism	Transport and infrastructure	Unspecified	Utilities
Board chairs	0% (n = 2)	0% (n = 4)	0% (n = 16)	0% (n = 1)	0% (n = 9)	0% (n = 1)	0% (n = 1)	0% (n = 3)	33% (n = 6)	0% (n = 3)
Directors	14% (n = 14)	19% (n = 26)	20% (n = 101)	0% (n = 6)	11% (n = 44)	29% (n = 7)	43% (n = 7)	8% (n = 13)	30% (n = 47)	11% (n = 19)
CEOs	0% (n = 2)	0% (n = 4)	0% (n = 18)	0% (n = 2)	0% (n = 7)	0% (n = 1)	100% (n = 1)	0% (n = 3)	33% (n = 3)	0% (n = 3)

CEO = chief executive officer, n = number (sample size).

Notes: Data are not reported by sector for women's representation as deputy chairs, executives, or senior leadership personnel, due to very small numbers. Diversified organizations conduct business activities in multiple sectors. Organizations in the "unspecified" category include chambers of commerce and other peak bodies and state-owned enterprises that did not fit into the sectors identified, such as housing organizations. Although the study covers 12 sectors, data are only available for 10 in the Papua New Guinea sample.

Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

communications, resources, transport and infrastructure, and utilities sectors.

Figure J.1: Women Directors on State-Owned Enterprise Boards in Papua New Guinea, 2012–2020 (%)
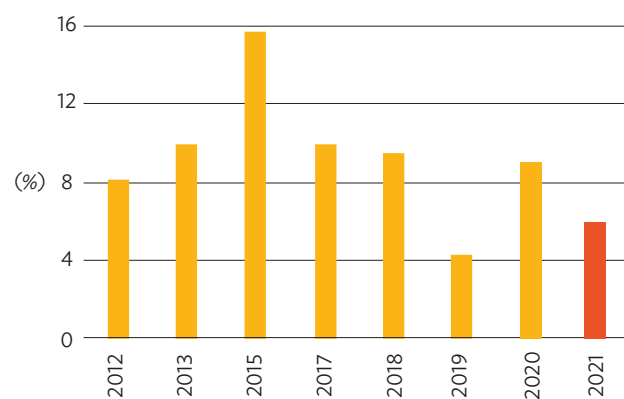
Notes: Sample size is n = 8, 8, 11, 12, 8, 9, 9, 13. Data not available for 2014 and 2016.
■ = 2021 data collection methodology differs from previous years.

Source: 2012–2020: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative. 2021: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative Leadership Matters dataset.

K. SAMOA

Samoa has a population of just over 200,000 people (ADB 2020a), largely concentrated on the two main islands of Savai'i and Upolu. Almost 80% of the population resides in rural areas (Government of Samoa 2016c). Samoa's economy is dependent on fisheries and agricultural products exports, development aid, and overseas remittances. Tourism is an increasingly important contributor to the economy, but the halt in global travel necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the sector's development.

Women's economic participation and leadership

The labor force participation rate in Samoa is 43% (World Bank n.d.). with the majority of Samoa's working-age population engaged in either subsistence or domestic activities or informal employment. Almost half of all working-age women listed domestic duties as their main activity (Government of Samoa 2016a). Women comprise 42% of the formal workforce overall but represent 57% of the public service (Government of Samoa 2019a). Within the private sector, women comprise 39% of the workforce with almost half employed in the wholesale and retail trade industry (32%) and accommodation and food services (17%) industries (Government of Samoa 2019a). Women in the private sector are less likely than men to be full-time employees or working proprietors but are more likely to be unpaid family or volunteer employees (Government of Samoa 2019b). Despite their lower labor force participation rate, women in formal employment have a higher average yearly wage than men (Samoa Bureau of Statistics 2021). The country has a strong tradition of women in leadership in family businesses, nongovernment organizations, and the public and private sectors. In government ministries, almost 30% of chief executive officer (CEO) positions and 70% of assistant CEO positions are held by women (Matire 2014). Women are also well represented in the private sector in Samoa, where they comprise 37% of shareholders of registered companies and 31% of company directors.[20] Women are estimated to run over 40% of Samoa's microenterprises, which constitute approximately 80% of all businesses in the country (Government of Samoa 2016b). Women have held leadership positions within private sector bodies such as the Samoa Chamber of Commerce, which appointed its first woman vice president in 2003, followed by its first woman president in 2007.

In the 2021 general elections, Samoa became only the second country in the Pacific to elect a woman as head of state.

A quarter of the 12-member cabinet are women, including Samoa's first woman Minister of Finance. Despite this, women have never held more than five seats in the 49-seat parliament, even after the introduction of legislation in 2013 to ensure that a minimum number (currently 10% or 5 seats) of parliamentary seats are filled by women. While Samoa is the only country in the Pacific to have introduced such provisions, the requirement to hold the title of *matai,* alongside other customary practices that limit women's opportunities to practice leadership within village structures, has prevented more women from attaining political leadership positions (Center for Samoan Studies 2015).

Enabling environment for gender equality

The Samoan constitution prohibits discrimination based on sex and/or gender, but there are limited protections against discrimination beyond the public sector. In Samoan culture, all family members share equal rights and women are equal to their male counterparts. Yet, even with these strong cultural traditions, gender inequality persists in Samoa. Women lag behind men in leadership and decision-making roles (Motusaga 2016) and 52.3% of women aged 15–49 report having experienced violence committed by a partner in their lifetime (Government of Samoa 2020).

Samoa was the first country in the Pacific region to ratify CEDAW and has a strong policy foundation for gender equality and inclusive development. The government launched five national policies in 2021:

1. The National Policy on Community Economic Development 2021-2031 that aims to increase the economic development of vulnerable individuals, families, and villages.
2. The National Policy on Inclusive Governance 2021-2031 outlines government commitments to decision-making, leadership, and development that includes the voices of all its citizens.
3. The National Policy on Family Safety: Elimination of Family Violence 2021-2031 that aims to eliminate family violence through prevention, early intervention, and response (and is supported by the Family Safety Act 2013).
4. The National Policy for Persons with Disabilities 2021-2031 that ensures the participation of people with disabilities, including women and girls, in the socio-political and economic development of Samoa.

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20   Source: Samoa Business Registry.

5. The National Policy on Gender Equality and Rights of Women and Girls 2021-2031 that aims to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

The new gender equality policy is aligned with commitments under the Sustainable Development Goals, CEDAW, the Beijing Platform for Action, and the Pacific Platform for Advancing Gender Equality and the Rights of Women. It outlines seven strategic policy priorities, including economic development, and leadership and decision-making. The policy commits the government to increase the economic empowerment of women by addressing the burden of unpaid labor, extending maternity leave provisions, and increasing access to affordable childcare. Under the leadership and decision-making priority area, the policy also commits to increasing measures for affirmative action encouraging women to apply for director positions on boards in both the public and private sectors.

The Social Development Division of the Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development has responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of gender equality commitments and policies. The ministry has 116 staff with a budget of ST14,043,838 (FY2020-21)[21] of which ST1,971,000 was allocated to social development services (Government of Samoa 2021).

Women in business leadership

Women in Samoa have a strong history in leadership roles across the public service, nongovernment organizations, and the private sector, underpinned by a supportive policy environment. The study's Samoa sample includes 22 organizations across a range of sectors, which provides a good basis for analyzing women's representation in business leadership. The findings show that the country has some of the highest rates of women's representation in business leadership among the Pacific countries included in this study, with women represented across all levels and organization types.

Women are well represented on boards in Samoa.

Across the sample, the proportion of women on boards varies significantly. While 24% of boards have gender parity, 10% have no women directors (Table K.1). However, a vast majority of organizations had some representation of women on their boards. 43% of boards have 30% or fewer women directors, and 24% have between 30% and 50% women directors.

Table K.1: Board Composition in Samoa

	Boards (%) (n = 21)	Regional average
Boards with no women directors	10%	32%
Boards with fewer than 30% women directors	43%	41%
Boards with between 30% and 50% women directors	24%	17%
Boards with gender parity	24%	11%

n = number (sample size).
Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

Women in Samoa hold more board chair positions than the regional average.

The overall proportion of women on boards in Samoa is 33%, well above the regional average of 21% (Table K.2). Women hold 19% of board chair positions, also above the regional average of 11%. Additionally, women in Samoa hold board chair positions across all organization types (Table K.4) and a range of sectors (Table K.5).

Women in Samoa are well represented in senior executive and management roles.

Table K.2: Women's Representation in Board Positions in Samoa

	Number of women	Number of men	Women (%)	Sample size	Regional average (% women)
Board chairs	4	17	19%	n = 21	11%
Deputy chairs	1	0	100%	n = 1	19%
Directors	40	82	33%	n = 122	21%

n = number (sample size).
Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

21 The Samoan financial year runs from 1 July to 30 June.

Table K.3: Women's Representation in Senior Executive and Management Positions in Samoa

	Number of women	Number of men	Women (%)	Sample size	Regional average (% women)
CEO	5	15	25%	n = 20	13%
CFO/COO	4	4	50%	n = 8	34%
All senior management personnel (including CEOs and CFO/COOs)	45	60	43%	n = 105	29%

CEO = chief executive officer, CFO = chief financial officer, COO = chief operating officer, n = number (sample size).

Note: Senior management personnel includes executive leadership (CEOs, CFOs, COOs, and equivalent) and all staff designated manager, department head, or equivalent.

Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

Table K.4: Women's Representation in Leadership in Samoa by Organization Type

	Industry associations	Other private sector organizations	State-owned enterprises
Board Chairs	50% (n = 2)	33% (n = 6)	8% (n = 13)
Directors	62% (n=21)	28% (n=36)	26% (n=65)
CEOs	0% (n = 1)	17% (n = 6)	31% (n = 13)

CEO = chief executive officer, n = number (sample size).

Notes: Data are not reported by organization type for women's representation as deputy chairs, executives, or senior leadership personnel due to very small numbers. Although the study includes five categories of organization type, data is only available for three in the Samoa sample.

Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

Table K.5: Women's Representation in Leadership in Samoa by Sector

	Finance	Media and communications	Tourism	Transport and infrastructure	Unspecified	Utilities
Board chairs	33% (n = 6)	0% (n = 1)	0% (n = 1)	0% (n = 5)	20% (n = 5)	33% (n = 3)
Directors	31% (n = 35)	14% (n = 7)	57% (n = 7)	27% (n = 26)	38% (n = 34)	31% (n = 13)
CEOs	33% (n = 6)	0% (n = 1)	…	0% (n = 5)	20% (n = 5)	67% (n = 3)

… = not available, CEO = chief executive officer, n = number (sample size).

Notes: Data are not reported by sector for women's representation as deputy chairs, executives, or senior leadership personnel, due to very small numbers. Diversified organizations conduct business activities in multiple sectors. Organizations in the "unspecified" category include chambers of commerce and other peak bodies and state-owned enterprises that did not fit into the sectors identified, such as housing organizations. Although the study covers 12 sectors, data are only available for 6 in the Samoa sample.

Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

Women hold 5 out of the 20 CEO positions in the sample (Table K.3), including 2 in the finance sector and 3 within SOEs—including two utilities. Women make up 44% of senior management teams, and the most diverse management teams are in the finance sector.

Women's representation in leadership is highest in Samoa's industry associations.

Women are well represented in leadership, including board chair positions, across all organization types (Table K.4). Industry associations have the highest proportion of women on their boards—more than half of all director positions and one out of two board chair roles are held by women. Women also hold a third of board chair positions in other private sector organizations, well above the 11% regional average.

Women comprise 26% of SOE directors in Samoa, lower than for other organization types but above the regional average for SOEs of 18%. Women hold 8% of Samoa's SOE board chair roles, just below the regional average of 11%. Existing data on women's representation on SOE boards during 2012–2020 shows that the proportion of women has increased since 2012, although gains have not been consistent (Figure K.1). During 2012–2020, women's representation on SOE boards rose from 20% to 30%. However, the proportion of women dropped in 2013 (20% to 18%) and again in 2019 (25% to 22%). The 2021 figure, though not directly comparable due to changes in data collection methodology and sample size, suggests another drop—from 30% to 26%.

Women's representation in leadership is highest in Samoa's tourism and finance sectors, the chamber of commerce, and state-owned utilities.

The proportion of women directors is highest in the tourism sector where women comprise more than half of all directors. Across all sectors, the proportion of women directors in Samoa is above the regional average, except for the media and communications sector where women comprise only 14% of directors. Consistent with several other countries in the study, women are well represented in the finance sector, comprising 33% of board chairs, 31% of directors, and 33% of CEO positions. Women are also well represented at all levels of leadership within state-owned utilities, comprising 33% of board chairs, 31% of directors, and 67% of CEO positions (Table K.5).

Figure K.1: Women Directors on State-Owned Enterprise Boards in Samoa, 2012–2021 *(%)*
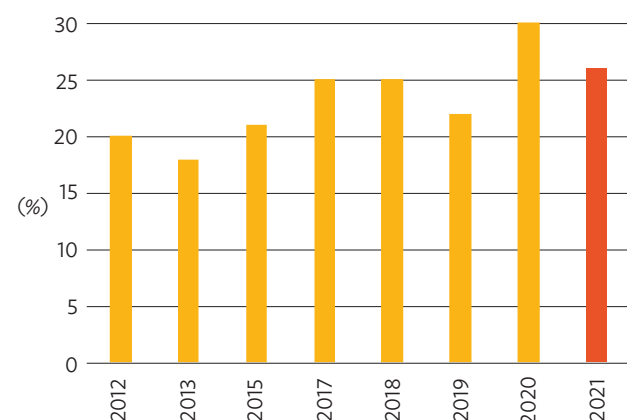
Notes: n = 27, 27, 29, 24, 25, 26, 24, 29. Data not available for 2014 and 2016.
■ = 2021 data collection methodology differs from previous years.
Sources: 2012–2020: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative. 2021: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative Leadership Matters dataset.

L. SOLOMON ISLANDS

Solomon Islands has a population of approximately 680,000 (ADB 2020a) spread across 300 islands. It has a large services sector, accounting for 59% of GDP, while agriculture accounts for 29% and industry—including mining, manufacturing, construction, and electricity—accounts for 16%. Subsistence activities and small-scale production is a dominant activity for Solomon Islanders. 89% of households grow at least some of their own food (Government of Solomon Islands 2009). Additionally, 86% of households engage in selling fish, crops, or handicrafts, and it is the primary source of income for 45% (Government of Solomon Islands 2009).

Women's economic participation and leadership

There are considerable gender differences in employment rates in Solomon Islands. At the time of the 2015 census, around 37% of women and 70% of men were employed (Solomon Islands National Statistics Office et al 2017). Agriculture was the dominant sector of employment—41% of employed women and 54% of employed men worked in agriculture (Solomon Islands National Statistics Office et al 2017). [22] Outside of agriculture, 27.3% of employed women worked in sales and services, and 15% worked in professional, technical, and managerial occupations (Solomon Islands National Statistics Office et al 2017). 19.6% of employed men undertook skilled manual labor, and 12.2% worked in professional, technical, and managerial occupations (Solomon Islands National Statistics Office et al 2017).

Women are overrepresented in producing for household consumption and in unpaid family work (Government of Solomon Islands 2009). Almost half (49%) of employed women receive no payment for their work, while 41% receive cash payments (Solomon Islands National Statistics Office et al 2009).

Women are also underrepresented as business owners. In 2020, women comprised 23% of business name owners in Solomon Islands.[23] As business name owners,[24] women are particularly well represented in the sectors of entertainment and catering (63%), insurance (50%), health (48%), retail and wholesale (38%), and education (37%).[25]

Enabling environment for gender equality

The Government of Solomon Islands has ratified CEDAW and has enacted legislation and policy to support gender equality. The Constitution of Solomon Islands 1978 prohibits gender discrimination, but anti-discrimination provisions do not apply in personal laws, customary law, or land tenure. Legislation to support gender equality and implement CEDAW in Solomon Islands includes the Family Violence Act 2014, which criminalizes physical, sexual, psychological, and economic abuse and implements protections for victims. The government has also developed the Gender Equality and Women's Development Policy 2016–2020; the Women, Peace and Security National Action Plan 2017–2021; a scholarship policy to support educational opportunities for girls and boys; and is implementing its 2015 National Strategy for the Economic Empowerment of Women and Girls which identifies systemic barriers that discriminate against women (ADB 2018b).

Gender-based violence is a persistent issue in Solomon Islands. Two in three women and girls have experienced physical or sexual violence from a partner (Government of Solomon Islands 2009b). Almost one in four girls in Solomon Islands (37%) experience sexual abuse before the age of 15 (Government of Solomon Islands, Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs n.d.). The Family Protection Act 2014 established a legal framework to address domestic violence as a criminal offense. Still, continued efforts are needed to enable women to access the formal justice system and to support survivors of violence.

The Government of Solomon Islands considers that all ministries and sectors share responsibility for achieving gender equality (ADB 2015). The Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs was established in 2007, which includes a Women's Development Division with eight staff focused on implementing policies relating to gender and women's development. The 2019 budget provided the ministry with funding of SI$13.2 million of a total SI$4,260.5 million (0.3%) (Government of Solomon Islands 2020).[26] Performance indicators on gender equality are considered in annual appraisals of the head of each ministry, and a gender focal point

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22 Currently married men and women aged 15-49, employed in 12 months prior to 2015 survey.

23 Source: Company Haus, Solomon Islands. Note: multiple people can own a given business name so these data do not equate to the proportion of businesses that are owned by women.

24 A business name is the name or title under which a person or entity conducts a business.

25 Multiple people can own a given business name so this data does not equate to the proportion of businesses that are owned by women.

26 PSDI analysis.

within each ministry supports gender mainstreaming (Tavola et al 2016).

There are few women in Solomon Islands' political leadership despite efforts to increase their representation. Several unsuccessful attempts to introduce temporary special measures have been made to increase women's representation in parliament. Nationally, the 2010 temporary special measures bill sought to reserve 10 seats in parliament for women but did not pass. The introduction of national temporary special measures was again debated in parliament in 2017, and in 2019 three provincial government assemblies endorsed the introduction of temporary special measures at the provincial level (Women's Rights Action Movement and International Women's Development Agency 2019). Although the 2014 Political Parties Integrity Act requires that women make up 10% of all candidates endorsed by political parties to contest elections, there are still just four women in the 50-seat parliament in 2021. Of 24 constitutional posts representing the highest level of decision-making, women fill only three. Women account for 16% of permanent secretary positions in the government.

There have also been efforts to boost women's representation in civil society. For example, the Uniting Church requires 30% representation of women at decision-making levels, and the Christian Fellowship Church requires that women fill half the positions in its highest decision-making body (Tavola et al 2016).

Women in business leadership

Solomon Islands has a large business sector relative to other countries in the study. The sample for Solomon Islands includes 30 organizations, comprising 20 other private sector organizations, 9 SOEs, and an industry association. The collected data highlight that women are underrepresented in many areas of business leadership. This finding is consistent with women's underrepresentation in political leadership and

lower participation in waged and salaried employment.

More than half of Solomon Islands boards have no women directors.

Just two boards have more than 30% women directors, and more than half of boards (57%) have no women directors (Table L.1).

Table L.1: Board Composition in Solomon Islands

	Boards (%) (n = 30)	Regional average
Boards with no women directors	57%	32%
Boards with fewer than 30% women directors	37%	41%
Boards with between 30% and 50% women directors	3%	17%
Boards with gender parity	3%	11%

n = number (sample size).
Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

Solomon Islands has the lowest level of women's representation on boards in the study.

The proportion of women in board director positions in Solomon Islands, at 11%, is well below the regional average of 21% (Table L.2) and is the lowest share observed in the study. No women hold the position of board chair within the sample, and just two boards had a woman deputy chair. However, the significant gender disparity in leadership in the organizations included in the sample does not necessarily reflect women's broader involvement in business. Data from 2020 on registered businesses – including smaller organizations and family-run operations excluded from this study—show that women

Table L.2: Women's Representation in Board Positions in Solomon Islands

	Number of women	Number of men	Women (%)	Sample size	Regional average (% women)
Board chairs	0	19	0%	n = 19	11%
Deputy chairs	2	4	33%	n = 6	19%
Directors	19	153	11%	n = 172	21%

n = number (sample size).
Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

Table L.3: Women's Representation in Senior Executive and Management Positions in Solomon Islands

	Number of women	Number of men	Women (%)	Sample size	Regional average (% women)
CEO	1	14	7%	n = 15	13%
CFO/COO	2	5	29%	n = 7	34%
All senior management personnel (including CEOs and CFOs/COOs)	22	77	22%	n = 99	29%

CEO = chief executive officer, CFO = chief financial officer, COO = chief operating officer, n = number (sample size).

Note: Senior management personnel includes executive leadership (CEOs, CFOs, COOs, and equivalent) and all staff designated manager, department head, or equivalent.

Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

Table L.4: Women's Representation in Leadership in Solomon Islands by Organization Type

	Industry associations	Other private sector organizations	State-owned enterprises
Board Chairs	0% (n = 1)	0% (n = 13)	0% (n = 5)
Directors	25% (n = 8)	10% (n = 108)	11% (n = 56)
CEOs	100% (n = 1)	0% (n = 8)	0% (n = 6)

CEO = chief executive officer, n = number (sample size).

Notes: Data are not reported by organization type for women's representation as deputy chairs, executives, or senior leadership personnel due to very small numbers. Although the study includes five categories of organization type, data are only available for three in the Solomon Islands sample.

Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

Table L.5: Women's Representation in Leadership in Solomon Islands by Sector

	Agriculture and fisheries	Diversified	Finance	Media and communications	Manufacturing	Resources	Services	Tourism	Transport	Unspecified	Utilities
Board chairs	0% (n = 2)	0% (n = 1)	0% (n = 3)	0% (n = 2)	0% (n = 1)	0% (n = 1)	0% (n = 1)	0% (n = 2)	0% (n = 2)	0% (n = 1)	0% (n = 3)
Directors	18% (n = 11)	13% (n = 8)	9% (n = 35)	21% (n = 19)	5% (n = 19)	14% (n = 7)	0% (n = 10)	10% (n = 10)	6% (n = 17)	11% (n = 19)	18% (n = 17)
CEOs	0% (n = 1)	…	0% (n = 3)	0% (n = 2)	0% (n = 1)	0% (n = 1)	0% (n = 1)	…	0% (n = 2)	100% (n = 1)	0% (n = 3)

… = not available, CEO = chief executive officer, n = number (sample size).

Note: Data are not reported by sector for women's representation as deputy chairs, executives, or senior leadership personnel due to very small numbers. "Diversified" organizations conduct business activities in multiple sectors. Organizations in the "unspecified" category include chambers of commerce and other peak bodies and state-owned enterprises that did not fit into the sectors identified, such as housing organizations. The study covers 12 sectors but data were only available for 11 sectors for the Solomon Islands sample.

Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

comprise 23% of company directors and 26% of shareholders. These proportions have been stable over time.[27]

Women are underrepresented in senior management in Solomon Islands, particularly as CEOs.

In Solomon Islands, just 1 CEO position out of 15 (7%) was held by a woman, although women comprised 23% of all senior management personnel (Table L.3). Data on the specific roles undertaken by women in senior management in Solomon Islands were limited. However, women comprised 29% of CFO/COO roles and, since these are important pathways to CEO positions, this may be promising for a future increase in women's leadership.

Women are underrepresented on boards in all organization types in Solomon Islands.

The sample for Solomon Islands included three organization types—industry associations, state-owned enterprises (SOEs), and other private sector organizations (Table L.4). Women's representation as directors was highest in the one industry association in the sample, at 25%, the Solomon Islands Chamber of Commerce. Given this is a representative body, its relatively high level of women's representation in leadership suggests that women may have business influence in ways that are not necessarily captured by this study's headline figures.

Women have historically been underrepresented on SOE boards in Solomon Islands (Figure L.1) and currently comprise just 11% of SOEs directors.

Figure L.1: Women Directors on State-Owned Enterprise Boards in Solomon Islands, 2012–2021 (%)
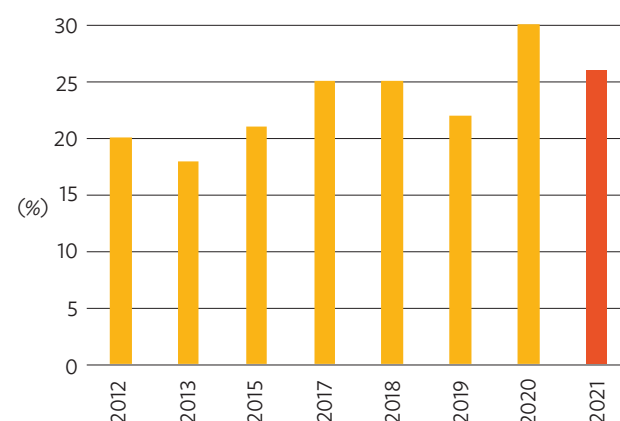
Notes: n = 27, 27, 29, 24, 25, 26, 24, 29. Data not available for 2014 and 2016.
■ = 2021 data collection methodology differs from previous years.
Sources: 2012–2020: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative. 2021: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative Leadership Matters dataset.

Women are more represented in leadership in media and communications, agriculture and fisheries, and utilities than in other sectors in Solomon Islands.

Like other countries in the study, the data for Solomon Islands suggest considerable variation in leadership across sectors. However, the sectors where women are relatively more and less represented contrast with regional trends identified throughout the study. For example, women's representation on boards in finance (9%) is among the lowest of all sectors in Solomon Islands. In comparison, utilities, and agriculture and fisheries boards have comparatively high representation of women (both at 18%) (Table L.5). This may reflect targeted efforts of organizations in these sectors, such as SolTuna, and partners, such as the International Finance Corporation, to boost women's representation in individual organizations.

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27   Women made up 22% of directors in 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018. Women made up 26% of shareholders in 2014 and 2015, and 25% in 2016, 2017 and 2018. Source: Company Haus.

Box 10: Developing the Next Generation of Women Business Leaders

Corporate boards globally are dominated by men, and these men tend to be older. A 2017 examination of S&P 500 boards in the United States (US) revealed that board members have an average age of 62.4 (Barrett and Lukomnik 2017). Data also suggests that directors are getting older over time. Among directors of ASX 100 listed boards in 2020, women directors were on average 57.9 years of age—a 6 month increase since the previous year, and men directors were on average 61.5—a 2 month increase since the previous year (Governance Institute of Australia 2020). A similar trend has been observed for the C-suite, with the average age of new senior executives in the US's biggest companies increasing between 2005 and 2018 from 45.9 to 54.1 for chief executive officers and from 44 to 48.9 for chief financial officers (Statista n.d.).

While experience will always be critical in corporate governance, young directors can bring new approaches, energy and enthusiasm, diverse educational backgrounds, and up-to-date knowledge (Engaging Young Leaders on Aged Care and Community Boards Program 2019). Including young directors with the right skills on boards is also a way for businesses to build a pipeline of qualified directors with deep experience and plan for the future.

Although most young people face challenges being seen and accepted as leaders, young women often encounter "double discrimination, for both their age and their gender" (Pacific Young Women's Leadership Alliance 2017). The additional challenges faced by young women in attaining leadership positions contributes to the poor representation of women in business leadership observed globally.

The Pacific Experience

In a region where more than half the population is under the age of 25 and youth unemployment rates are almost double the global average, opportunities for young people, particularly young women, are crucial for economic and social development (Pacific Community 2015).

Young women in the Pacific face the double constraint of gender and age, with traditional and cultural ideas about the roles expected for women determining perceptions of the value of their "skills, knowledge, and contributions," as leaders (Pacific Young Womens Leadership Alliance 2017). Supporting young women in leadership benefits individual

young women and has positive impacts on gender equality in communities more broadly (Monash Gender, Peace and Security Centre et al 2019). Access to mentors, role models, and training opportunities are important ways to support young women's career pathways (Pacific Young Women's Leadership Alliance 2017). This work and support is also critical to build a pipeline of women with the experience to take on senior leadership roles in the future.

Across the region, organizations are working to nurture young women leaders. One such organization is Graduate Women (Fiji). This voluntary, non-profit organization works to "promote lifelong education, to improve the status of women and girls and to enable women to effect positive change for a peaceful world" (Graduate Women (Fiji) n.d.b). It has a network of members, who are professional women from diverse fields that provide career advice and support to young women, and produces a range of resources to support mentoring (Graduate Women (Fiji) n.d.a). The organization focuses on encouraging more young women into traditionally male-dominated sectors such as science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, including through scholarships for further education. Among its other activities, Graduate Women (Fiji) organizes a mentoring walk each year to accelerate opportunities for young women leaders and provide a setting for established and emerging women leaders to discuss professional challenges and successes (Graduate Women (Fiji) n.d.a).

In the Pacific, innovators and entrepreneurs are perceived primarily as men older than 25 (United National Development Programme et al 2019). To encourage more women entrepreneurs, ygap, an international organization focused on global equity through inclusive entrepreneurship, offers the yher accelerator program (Ygap n.d.). The program supports women entrepreneurs at the early stages of building their businesses in the Pacific and seeks to equip participants with the skills, knowledge, connections, funding, and community that they need to develop sustainable, scalable businesses (Yher n.d.a.). Since 2018, yher has worked alongside 22 women entrepreneurs across the region, many of whom are young women (Yher n.d.b.).

Another organization actively working to enable and empower young women to lead in business is the Young Entrepreneurs Council Solomon Islands (YECSI). YECSI is one of a number

of Young Entrepreneurs Councils in the Pacific, alongside councils in Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa, Tonga, and Vanuatu.

YECSI aims to work with young people to help them to become job creators through entrepreneurship. Among YECSI members, 34% of business owners are women, and women account for 30% of the members' employees. YECSI coordinator Emmanuel Pitakaka reflects that "Some organizations have taken the lead in trying to empower women to secure senior management positions. But I think there is more that needs to be done to put gender and socially inclusive policies in place that could facilitate and empower women to further their career and achieve leadership positions or even the board."

YECSI has taken steps to embed diversity and inclusion within the organization. The YECSI constitution requires a gender-balanced board—with at least three men and three women among its seven trustees—and invests in supporting its directors, with women directors taking part in a directorship training facilitated by the New Zealand Institute of Directors. YECSI recognizes the need for continued work to build inclusivity. Emmanuel notes that "one of the areas that we are trying to improve is developing gender and socially inclusive policies."

Facilitating training and workshops to strengthen the capacity of entrepreneurs is a key objective for YECSI. These training sessions cover mentoring, coaching, networking, branding, developing business plans, and bookkeeping. Emmanuel notes that young women face challenges attending these events—which are typically scheduled for the evening—due to the expectations of their families and partners. "While we wanted them to really engage in our activities, our trainings, or other services that we provided, these expectations from their partners, or from their families, are sometimes constraints to [women's] development, to fully engage and participate, and grow in their business career."

YECSI has considered changing the timing of its activities to increase the likelihood that women can attend. Emmanuel also sees a role for cultural change to challenge expectations that women will be home. "I also believe that this sort of culture from our parents, our peers, and also our partners, in particular, needs to change. Because at the end of the day, it's for the betterment of everyone, not just those who are attending

these events." A change in expectations is particularly important for women with children. In Emmanuel's view, looking after kids "comes back to both partners."

For Emmanuel, delivering on YECSI's inclusivity principles is integral to the organization's broader impact in Solomon Islands. "We want this to be not just written on paper but being seen to be done in our work within our organization, and those that we work with, those we partner with."

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Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative. Based on desk research and author's interview with Emmanuel Pitakaka, Young Entrepreneurs Council Solomon Islands Coordinator, 6 May 2021.

M. TONGA

Tonga, the only constitutional monarchy in the Pacific, has a population of 99,600 (ADB 2020a) residing on 36 of the country's 176 islands. It is the world's second most vulnerable country to disasters triggered by natural hazards (Government of the Kingdom of Tonga 2021). The economy of Tonga is small and reliant on remittances, tourism, agriculture, fisheries, and foreign aid. Services account for 52.7% of gross domestic product (Government of the Kingdom of Tonga 2021). State-owned enterprises play an important role in the economy, providing telecommunications, utilities, transport, and finance services. Across Tonga, 80% of households engage in some form of agricultural activity, such as cropping, livestock, fisheries, handicrafts, and forestry, 95% of which is subsistence or semi-subsistence (Government of the Kingdom of Tonga, Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Fisheries et al 2015).

Women's economic participation and leadership

Tonga experiences a considerable gender gap in labor force participation. In 2016, 43% of women were not in the labor force, compared with just 29% of men. 30% of women of working age compared to 49% of men, were in paid employment. Of those, 65% worked for wages or salaries, and 28% were self-employed (Government of the Kingdom of Tonga 2019).

Women are underrepresented as both employees and employers in Tonga. Women comprise 35% of private sector employees, 42% of public sector employees, and about 35% of employers (Government of the Kingdom of Tonga 2019). In the formal sector, women are predominately employed in food and accommodation, retail, media, and professional services (ADB 2018b). Data from the Business Registries Office of Tonga indicate that women comprise 28% of directors of all registered companies and 31% of shareholders (ADB 2018b). Women hold 42% of business licenses, and 40% of business names are registered to women (ADB 2018b). Additionally, many women operate in Tonga's informal sector, as employees, employers, or market vendors of their own produce and/or handicrafts (ADB 2018b). Informal employment is more common in rural areas and on the outer islands than in urban areas (ADB 2018b).

Tonga has few women in Parliament, but women are well represented in other public decision-making and leadership roles. The Parliament of Tonga includes 17 people's representatives, elected by the whole population, and

nine members elected by Tongan Nobles (Pacific Women in Politics n.d.d.). The King of Tonga can directly appoint up to four members (PACWIP n.d.d). Two women were elected in the 2017 elections and a third was appointed in 2019 (PACWIP n.d.d). In the 2016 local government elections, women comprised just 1.1% of elected officers (Government of the Kingdom of Tonga 2019). Despite low parliamentary representation, women make up 24% of CEOs and commissioners and 49% of the total employees of Public Service Commission-governed ministries (Government of the Kingdom of Tonga 2020).[28]

Enabling environment for gender equality

Tongan women traditionally have high status within families. A chosen sister, usually the eldest, is designated *fahu*—an honored, respected position (Government of the Kingdom of Tonga 2019). However, this status does not necessarily translate to power or gender equality (Lee 2017). Restrictions on women's ability to own land in Tonga are a fundamental barrier to increasing their engagement in business and entrepreneurship (Nagarajan 2009). Women, especially those working in the informal sector, also face limited access to markets and finance, limited information about business and business skills, lack of access to training, and complex import and export requirements (ADB 2018b).

Tonga is one of six countries that have not ratified CEDAW (UN Women n.d.) and it has very few pieces of legislation to support gender equality. The Constitution of Tonga does not guarantee men and women equal rights, laws related to land ownership and divorce discriminate against women, and Tonga lacks employment legislation that could ensure equitable treatment of men and women at work (Government of the Kingdom of Tonga 2019). Maternity leave in Tonga is available only to civil servants and police (Government of the Kingdom of Tonga 2019). Three of four women in Tonga report experiencing physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetime (Government of the Kingdom of Tonga 2019). Rates of non-partner violence against women are particularly high in Tonga—two-thirds of women report physical violence by someone other than a partner, such as fathers or teachers (Government of the Kingdom of Tonga 2019).

The government has acknowledged the need to "address the needs and concerns of women and men while upholding

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28   Schedule 1 and schedule 2 agencies combined.

Table M.1: Board Composition in Tonga

	Boards (%) (n = 9)	Regional average
Boards with no women directors	22%	32%
Boards with fewer than 30% women directors	56%	41%
Boards with between 30% and 50% women directors	11%	17%
Boards with gender parity	11%	11%

n = number (sample size).

Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

traditional Tongan values" (UN Women n.d.). Tonga has developed policies to advance women's empowerment and representation, including the National Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality Tonga Policy and Strategic Plan of Action 2019-2025. This builds on the previous National Policy on Gender and Development (2001, revised 2011) and the 2014-2018 National Policy on Gender and Development. The plan sets out six priority outcomes to mainstream gender equality and empower women, including "increased women's leadership and equitable political representation" (Government of the Kingdom of Tonga 2019). Tonga has signed regional commitments to gender equality, including the Pacific Leader's Gender Equality Declaration 2012, and has developed a Gender Mainstreaming Handbook 2019 and several gender responsive public financial management systems and processes (International Monetary Fund 2020). Responsibility for implementation and monitoring of Tonga's gender equality commitments sits with the Women's Affairs and Gender Equality Division of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The ministry's budget allocation for the 2021/2022 fiscal year[29]

was T$14,544,600 (2.9% of total budget) for all activities in its portfolio including gender equality programs.

Women in business leadership

Tongan women have a high traditional and ceremonial status that does not translate to power or political representation (Bleakley 2002). The sample for Tonga includes 17 organizations, comprising 14 SOEs, 1 industry association, and 2 other private sector organizations.[30] The collected data highlight the underrepresentation of women on many of Tonga's boards, but show that women are well represented in senior executive and management positions.

Overall, women are underrepresented on boards in Tonga.

A majority of boards in Tonga have fewer than 30% women directors. From a total of nine boards, two have no women directors, and just one board is gender balanced (Table M.1).

The proportion of women as directors and board chairs in Tonga is just below regional averages.

Women account for 19% of directors in Tonga, just below the regional average of 21%. There is one woman chair among the 13 chairs in the study, below the regional average of 11% (Table M.2). One woman deputy chair is among the nine deputy chairs observed, below the regional average of 19%.

Women are represented in senior leadership in Tonga at rates well above the regional average.

Women comprise 18% of CEOs, 62% of CFO/COOs, and 39% of all senior management personnel in Tonga's sample, exceeding or meeting the regional average on all three measures (Table M.3).

Table M.2: Women's Representation in Board Positions in Tonga

	Number of women	Number of men	Women (%)	Sample size	Regional average (% women)
Board chairs	1	9	10%	n = 10	11%
Deputy chairs	1	5	17%	n = 6	19%
Directors	10	42	19%	n = 52	21%

n = number (sample size).

Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

29   The fiscal year in Tonga ends on 30 June.

30   Data availability varies by organization. Partial data are available for 18 of the 20 organizations identified in the sample. Tonga has established five shared boards for its SOEs. Board composition data is reported once per board, while executive and senior management data is reported at the SOE level.

Table M.3: Women's Representation in Senior Executive and Management Positions in Tonga

	Number of women	Number of men	Women (%)	Sample size	Regional average (% women)
CEO	3	14	18%	n = 17	13%
CFO/COO	8	5	62%	n = 13	34%
All senior management personnel (including CEOs and CFO/COOs)	28	43	39%	n = 71	29%

CEO = chief executive officer, CFO = chief financial officer, COO = chief operating officer, n = number (sample size).

Note: Senior management personnel includes executive leadership (CEOs, CFOs, COOs, and equivalent) and all staff designated manager, department head, or equivalent.

Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

Table M.4: Women's Representation in Leadership in Tonga by Organization Type

	Industry associations	Other private sector organizations	State-owned enterprises
Board Chairs	0% (n = 1)	0% (n = 2)	14% (n = 7)
Directors	…	23% (n = 13)	18% (n = 39)
CEOs	100% (n = 1)	0% (n = 2)	14% (n = 14)

… = not available, CEO = chief executive officer, n = number (sample size).

Notes: Data are not reported by organization type for women's representation as deputy chairs, executives, or senior leadership personnel due to very small numbers. Although the study includes five categories of organization type, data are only available for three in the Tonga sample.

Table M.5: Women's Representation in Leadership in Tonga by Sector

	Finance	Media and communications	Transport and infrastructure	Utilities	Unspecified
Board chairs	0% (n = 3)	50% (n = 2)	0% (n = 2)	0% (n = 1)	0% (n = 2)
Directors	22% (n = 18)	17% (n = 12)	10% (n = 10)	17% (n = 6)	33% (n = 6)
CEOs	25% (n = 4)	33% (n = 3)	0% (n = 4)	0% (n = 4)	50% (n = 2)

CEO = chief executive officer, n = number (sample size).

Note: Data are not reported by sector for women's representation as deputy chairs, executives, or senior leadership personnel due to very small numbers. Organizations in the "unspecified" category include chambers of commerce and other peak bodies and state-owned enterprises that did not fit into the sectors identified, such as housing organizations. Although the study includes 12 sectors, data are only available for 5 in the Tonga sample.
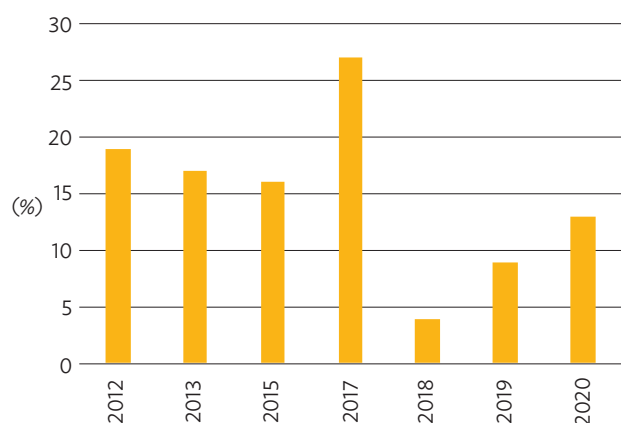
Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

Women's representation on Tonga's state-owned enterprise boards is high.

Of the nine boards where data about the composition of directors is available, seven are SOEs, including the five shared boards that oversee 12 public enterprises. Women comprise 14% of their board chairs, and 18% of their directors (Table M.4). Women are less represented in industry associations and other private sector organizations, but this could be a consequence of the small sample and limited data available. There is one woman CEO of an industry association, and women comprise 23% of directors of other private sector organizations.

Volatility has been considerable in the percentage of women on SOE boards over time. For example, women accounted for 27% of SOE board directors in 2017 but just 4% in 2018 (Figure M.1).

Figure M.1: Women Directors on State-Owned Enterprise Boards in Tonga, 2012–2021 (%)

Notes: n = 15, 15, 13, 5, 5, 5, 5. Data not available for 2014 and 2016. Note: Tonga established five shared boards for SOEs in December 2015.
Sources: 2012–2020: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative.

Women are particularly represented in leadership in Tonga's media and communications, and finance sectors.

In the media and communications sector, one of the two boards chairs is a woman (50%) and women account for 17% of directors and 33% of CEOs (Table M.5). As seen in several other countries included in this study, the finance sector has high proportions of women directors (22%) and CEOs (25%). Additionally, the only CEO of a chamber of commerce included in the sample is a woman.

Women are almost absent from the transport and infrastructure sector in Tonga. Just one woman is included among the ten board positions in this sector. Additionally, none of the four transport and infrastructure sector organizations had a woman CEO or board chair.

Box 11: Increasing Women's Leadership in a Male-Dominated Sector

Falemei Fale, Human Resources Manager for Tonga Power Limited (TPL), is optimistic that "we're slowly moving towards a more positive, brighter future for our women."

TPL has recently undertaken a successful effort to increase its number of women employees. Falamei attributes this success to several factors including a supportive chief executive officer, setting policy goals, and support from the community and donors, including through the Asian Development Bank's energy sector projects.

And with the appointment of the first women to TPL's Board of Directors in September 2020 and three women now in senior management positions, Falemei is confident that TPL can continue to make progress on gender equality.

Women account for just 22% of the global labor force in the energy sector. But TPL is determined to be a leader in the sector by increasing the proportion of women across its workforce by 5% every year—including in technical roles like line technicians. TPL uses the regional benchmarks established through the Pacific Power Association's gender portal to measure progress. The portal publishes data on the representation of women at all levels and across technical and non-technical roles to create a Pacific regional average for the energy sector.

To meet their target, TPL is identifying and addressing barriers to women pursuing non-traditional careers. To increase the number of qualified women, TPL has worked with the local tertiary institute to increase the number of women undertaking electrical engineering studies, offering scholarships and work experience opportunities. The company also conducted outreach to families and communities to address safety concerns and tackle the perception that working for a power company is "man's work."

TPL targeted the recruitment of women to more senior positions, headhunting and prioritizing qualified women candidates for vacancies. To make its workplace more gender-inclusive, TPL also conducted gender training for its staff and ensured there were restrooms and other facilities available for women, especially those working in the field.

Since making the commitment to further gender equality within their organization, TPL has increased the proportion of women in their workforce to 25% in 2021. The increasing number of women line technicians repairing damage to power lines, especially in the aftermath of Tropical Cyclone Gita in 2018, has increased the visibility of women in non-traditional roles in Tonga. Along with its ongoing outreach to schools and communities and a social media campaign, TPL is actively contributing to a major shift in societal attitudes, challenging the view that women cannot or should not take on jobs in traditionally male-dominated industries.

Although TPL has had success in recruiting women, there are still more issues to address, such as the retention of women after marriage and children. TPL plans to develop policies and measures to increase support for women to remain in the workforce, such as flexible working hours and improved maternity leave provisions.

Falemei's advice to other organizations wanting to support women in their organization is to "start small, start now. Find women and men who can champion our cause and add support within the company and push through those things."

Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative. Based on author's interview with Falemei Fale, Human Resources Manager, TPL, 25 January 2021.

N. TUVALU

Tuvalu is a small island developing state with a population of 10,600 (ADB 2020a) across nine small atolls in the western Pacific. It is geographically isolated and has a narrow economic base, making it particularly vulnerable to economic and climatic shocks. Its economy depends on fishing license fees, trust fund investments, official development assistance, and remittances for foreign currency earnings (ADB n.d.).

Women's economic participation and leadership

Although labor force participation in Tuvalu fell during 2012-2017 for both men and women, a considerable gender gap remains. The 2017 census indicates that 58.5% of men and 39.7% of women participate in the labor force. In rural areas, labor force participation is just 31.3% for women (Tuvalu Central Statistics Division 2017). Recent efforts have been made to support women and girls to access traditionally male-dominated fields. For example, in the past 5 years, women have—for the first time—enrolled in the maritime school, and women are increasingly taking part in international labor mobility programs (Government of Tuvalu 2019).

Women's representation in politics is low. Tuvalu does not have formal political parties, and campaigns are based on personal connections and reputation (PACWIP n.d.e.). Three women have been elected since independence in 1978. The 2019 election returned one woman among 15 members (7%) (PACWIP n.d.e.). Tuvalu has considered introducing Temporary Special Measures at a sub-national level, but none are currently in place.

Enabling environment for gender equality

Tuvalu has ratified CEDAW and the government has developed policies and legislation to advance gender equality and women's empowerment, including the Family Protection and Domestic Violence Act 2014, which recognizes domestic violence as a crime. The Tuvalu National Gender Policy 2014 builds on the National Women's Policy of 1999, and focuses on strengthening institutions and building capacity, women's economic empowerment, women in decision-making, and ending violence against women (Government of Tuvalu 2014). The policy includes a Strategic Plan of Action, with a policy objective of "ensuring women's and men's equal access and full participation in decision-making as a means of enhancing leadership and governance at all levels." The policy and strategic plan are implemented through the Gender Affairs Department, which has five staff and sits under the Office of the Prime Minister (Government of Tuvalu 2019). Gender equality

outcomes are also included in *Te Kakeega* (National Strategy for Sustainable Development). Despite these efforts, women face some systemic barriers in Tuvalu, including some discriminatory legislation and lack of access to land (Pacific Women 2017c). Four in 10 women in Tuvalu have reported experiencing physical or sexual violence in their lifetimes (Pacific Community 2013).

Women in business leadership

The business sector in Tuvalu is small and economic opportunities are constrained by the economy's narrow base and its vulnerability to shocks. Despite support from the Government of Tuvalu for gender equality, significant gender gaps in labor force participation remain. The sample for Tuvalu includes data for just seven organizations including one private sector organization and six SOEs.

Women are represented on most boards in Tuvalu.

Data on board composition was available for six organizations. Of these, one board (17%) had no women. A further two boards (33%) had fewer than 30% women directors. Half the boards in the sample had more than 30% women directors, including one board (17%) with gender parity (Table N.1).

The proportion of women as board chairs and directors in Tuvalu is above the regional average.

Two of the seven boards for which board chair data was available had women chairs (29%), well above the regional average of 11% (Table N.2). The proportion of women as

Table N.1: Board Composition in Tuvalu

	Boards (%) (n = 6)	Regional average
Boards with no women directors	17%	32%
Boards with fewer than 30% women directors	33%	41%
Boards with between 30% and 50% women directors	33%	17%
Boards with gender parity	17%	11%

n = number (sample size).
Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

directors (29%) is also above the regional average (21%). No data are available on deputy chairs in Tuvalu.

Women in Tuvalu are represented in senior executive and management roles.

The data indicate that two of the seven organizations in the sample had women chief executive officers (CEOs) (29%), including Tuvalu Post Ltd, which also has a woman board chair. Data are only available for one CFO/COO position, but this position was held by a woman (100%) (Table N.3). High levels of representation in senior management personnel (including CEOs and CFO/COOs)—36%, based on information from seven organizations—suggest that women are well positioned to progress into executive and board roles.

Women are represented at all levels of state-owned enterprise leadership in Tuvalu.

Across the region, women tend to be less represented as board chairs, directors, and CEOs in SOEs. However, in Tuvalu, women comprise 20% of SOE board chairs, 32% of SOE directors, and 33% of SOE CEOs (Table N.4).

Sector trends in women's business leadership in Tuvalu are challenging to discern due to the small sample.

Women are 40% of directors in the agricultural and fisheries sector, and the one CEO in the sector is a woman (Table N.5). This high figure contrasts with the relatively low proportion of women in the agriculture and fisheries sector in the wider regional sample. Women comprise 38% of directors in the finance sector, consistent with the pattern in the region of high levels of women's representation in finance sector leadership in the region.

Table N.2: Women's Representation in Board Positions in Tuvalu

	Number of women	Number of men	Women (%)	Sample size	Regional average (% women)
Board chairs	2	5	29%	n = 7	11%
Deputy chairs	–	–	–	n = 0	19%
Directors	9	22	29%	n = 31	21%

n = number (sample size).
Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

Table N.3: Women's Representation in Senior Executive and Management Positions in Tuvalu

	Number of women	Number of men	Women (%)	Sample size	Regional average (% women)
CEO	2	5	29%	n = 7	13%
CFO/COO	1	0	100%	n = 1	34%
All senior management personnel (including CEOs and CFO/COOs)	9	16	36%	n = 25	29%

CEO = chief executive officer, CFO = chief financial officer, COO = chief operating officer, n = number (sample size).
Note: Senior management personnel includes executive leadership (CEOs, CFOs, COOs, and equivalent) and all staff designated manager, department head, or equivalent.
Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

Table N.4: Women's Representation in Leadership in Tuvalu by Organization Type

	Industry associations	Other private sector organizations	State-owned enterprises
Board Chairs	100% (n = 1)	0% (n = 1)	20% (n = 5)
Directors	…	17% (n = 6)	32% (n = 25)
CEOs	…	0% (n = 1)	33% (n = 6)

… = not available, CEO = chief executive officer, n = number (sample size).

Notes: Data are not reported by organization type for women's representation as deputy chairs, executives, or senior leadership personnel due to very small numbers. Although the study includes five categories of organization type, data are only available for three in the Tuvalu sample.

Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

Table N.5: Women's Representation in Leadership in Tuvalu by Sector

	Agriculture and fisheries	Finance	Unspecified	Utilities
Board chairs	0% (n = 1)	0% (n = 3)	50% (n = 2)	100% (n = 1)
Directors	40% (n = 5)	38% (n = 16)	0% (n = 5)	20% (n = 5)
CEOs	100% (n = 1)	0% (n = 3)	0% (n = 1)	50% (n = 2)

CEO = chief executive officer, n = number (sample size).

Note: Data are not reported by sector for women's representation as deputy chairs, executives, or senior leadership personnel due to very small numbers. Organizations in the "unspecified" category include chambers of commerce and other peak bodies and state-owned enterprises that did not fit into the sectors identified, such as housing organizations. Although the study includes 12 sectors, data are only available for 4 in the Tuvalu sample.

Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

O. VANUATU

Vanuatu's 84 islands have a population of 290,800 (ADB 2020a) and an economy driven by tourism, public infrastructure spending, private sector construction, and foreign aid (ADB n.d.b.). The services sector—encompassing tourism, financial, retail trade, transport, real estate, telecommunication, government services, and professional services—makes up almost 60% of GDP and is concentrated in urban areas (Rangonmal et al 2020). In 2009, the private sector employed around 18,500 people, while the government employed around 6,500 (Vanuatu National Statitics Office [NSO] 2011). Vanuatu depends highly on imports, has a small manufacturing base, and produces small export quantities of cattle, beef, copra, coconut oil, and kava. The importance of tourism to the economy means impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly restrictions on global travel, have been considerable. GDP is expected to contract 3% in 2021 (ADB 2021c), following a 9.8% contraction in 2020 (ADB 2021a). In addition, the country is ranked the world's most vulnerable to disasters (Mucke et al 2020), including tropical cyclones, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, tsunamis, and flooding.

Of the working population, 75% are based in the large informal economy (ADB 2018b). Wages and salaries are the main source of household income for just 28% of households—less in rural areas (Government of Vanuatu 2017),[31] where around 75% of the population resides. The most common occupation for both men and women is subsistence farming or smallholder crop production (Rangonmal et al 2020).

Women's economic participation and leadership

Men are far more likely to be employed than women in Vanuatu. Data from a 2016 mini census indicate that 38% of adult men are employed, compared with 22% of adult women (Government of Vanuatu 2017). 40% of women reported that their main activity in the past seven days was unpaid work, compared with 23% of men (Government of Vanuatu 2017). Data from the 2009 census indicate that men hold a vast majority of jobs in the private (64%) and public sectors (61%), while women comprise 85% of full-time homemakers (Vanuatu NSO 2011).

Gender gaps in employment exist across all occupations and sectors. Women are more likely to work as teachers, childcare providers, cleaners, and handicraft producers, while men tend to be employed as drivers or block layers and in protective services (Vanuatu NSO 2011). Men hold the greater share of jobs in all sectors of the economy, but women are particularly underrepresented in some industries, such as manufacturing and mining (Vanuatu NSO 2011). Within sectors where women are well-represented, they are often concentrated in less highly paid roles. For example, women comprise 60% of the health workforce but are primarily employed as nurses and midwives (Vnauatu NSO 2011). However, some progress has been made. In 2009, women comprised 43% of all professional and technical workers, an increase from 39% in 1999 (Vanuatu NSO 2011). Additionally, women comprised 29% of all legislators, senior officers, and managers in 2009, a considerable increase from 21% in 1999 (Vanuatu NSO 2011).

Women in Vanuatu face particular barriers to entrepreneurship and economic participation. These include constraints accessing capital, markets, and financial services (Bowman et al 2009). However, the Reserve Bank of Vanuatu has developed a National Financial Inclusion Strategy (2018-2023), and the country has committed to closing the gender gap in financial inclusion (Government of Vanuatu, Ministry of Justice and Community Services n.d.).[32] In 2016, just 25% of women in Vanuatu had an account with a commercial bank, compared with 37% of men (Government of Vanuatu 2017).[33]

Women's representation in leadership in the public sector is low but the government has introduced measures to improve this. Actions include reforms to the Foreign Services Act and Public Service Act to increase women's participation and representation in these sectors (Government of Vanuatu, Ministry of Justice and Community Services n.d.). In 2014, the Vanuatu Council of Ministers mandated that at least one qualified woman be considered for each vacancy on a government committee, task force, working group, or other official body (Government of Vanuatu, Department of Women's Affairs, n.d.). There has been an increase in women director generals (from 0 to 15% in 5 years) and directors (from 4% to 21% in 5 years) within the public service (Government of Vanuatu, Ministry of Justice and Community Services n.d.).

Vanuatu has had very little representation of women in parliamentary leadership. Since independence in 1980, just

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31 PSDI calculations. Table 3.38: Household by Main Source of Household Income and by Region.

32 Note: 2016 commitment at Alliance for Financial Inclusion Global Policy Forum.

33 PSDI calculations. Table 1.34: Population by Bank Account–Commercial and Sex by Single Age.

five women have been elected to Parliament (PACWIP n.d.f.). Several policy measures have been implemented to address this. Vanuatu's *National Plan of Action for Women 2007–2011* articulated a goal of increasing the representation of women in Parliament to 30% by 2015 (Bowman et al 2009). The government also amended the Municipalities Act in 2013 to include a temporary special measure that established a 30% quota for women on municipal councils. This reform was intended to increase women's political participation and leadership gradually, starting with local level and moving through to national parliament (PACWIP n.d.f.). The 2019 *Vot Woman* campaign, led by community leaders, presented a petition calling for new temporary special measures or quotas to be introduced to reach 50% women in Parliament for 2020 and beyond (Loop Pacific 2019). However, although 17 women candidates contested the 2020 national elections, none were elected to Parliament (PACWIP n.d.f.).

Enabling environment for gender equality

Vanuatu has made some legislative commitments to gender equality, but discriminatory laws and practices persist. It has ratified CEDAW and its constitution enshrines gender equality. However, the constitution also recognizes traditional customary law, which can discriminate against women. Discriminatory laws also restrict women's property and inheritance rights, the country has no sexual harassment legislation, and fault-based divorce is practiced (UN Women n.d.b.).

Vanuatu has several laws and policies designed to promote gender equality. It developed its first national gender equality policy in 2015, and in 2021 launched the National Gender Equality Policy 2020-2030 with a mission to "promote respect and equal rights, opportunities and responsibilities among men and women of all ages and abilities in Vanuatu" (Government of Vanuatu 2021). The policy includes five strategic priorities including enhancing women's economic empowerment and skills development and advancing women's leadership and political participation.. However, funding for the implementation of gender equality policies has historically been limited (Government of Vanuatu, Ministry of Justice and Community Services n.d.). The Department of Women's Affairs, within the Ministry of Justice, relies on donor partners to fund programs—particularly the governments of Australia and New Zealand. Efforts have been made to mainstream gender within sectoral policies, including through gender responsive budgeting (Government of Vanuatu, Ministry of Justice and Community Services n.d.).

The Government of Vanuatu is working to address gender-based violence and women's participation in key public sector positions through legislative reform. Approximately 60% of

women in Vanuatu have experienced physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetime (Government of Vanuatu 2015), and the government has implemented reforms to the Family Protection Act to better address this issue (Government of Vanuatu, Ministry of Justice and Community Services n.d.).

Women in business leadership

The Vanuatu sample for this study includes 18 organizations across a range of sectors. The findings show that, despite government efforts to promote women in leadership positions in politics and the public service, their representation in business leadership in Vanuatu still trails regional averages.

Women are underrepresented in business leadership in the formal private sector in Vanuatu.

Half the boards in the sample have no women directors, far higher than the study's regional average of 32% (Table O.1). Women make up more than 30% of directors in just 20% of boards in the Vanuatu sample.

Table O.1: Board Composition in Vanuatu

	Boards (%) (n = 14)	Regional average
Boards with no women directors	50%	32%
Boards with fewer than 30% women directors	29%	41%
Boards with between 30% and 50% women directors	14%	17%
Boards with gender parity	7%	11%

n = number (sample size).
Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

Vanuatu has few women board chairs or deputy chairs.

The Vanuatu sample captures just one woman board chair and one woman deputy chair (Table O.2). Women comprise 8% of board chairs, below the regional average, but 25% of deputy chairs, above the regional average. Women are 18% of directors of the 14 boards included in the sample.

Women are represented as senior executives in Vanuatu.

The sample includes two women CEOs (15%) and one woman CFO/COO (14%) (Table O.3). While the representation of women as CEOs and senior management personnel is above

Box 12: How Air Vanuatu is Rising to the Diversity Challenge

Air Vanuatu is a leader for gender diversity in the aviation sector and the only Pacific national carrier signatory to the International Air Transport Association (IATA) "25by2025" campaign.

IATA introduced the 25by2025 campaign in September 2019, challenging its members to increase the representation of women within the industry, either by 25%, or to at least 25% by 2025. Air Vanuatu saw the challenge as an opportunity to lead the Pacific aviation sector for gender diversity.

"We identified the very real need to publicly validate our commitment to gender diversity and saw the IATA challenge as an opportunity that would not only benefit women in aviation in Vanuatu, but benefit us as an airline as well," said Air Vanuatu's former chief executive officer, Derek Nice, when Air Vanuatu announced that had surpassed the commitments of the campaign in 2020 (Air Vanuatu n.d.).

Air Vanuatu reported in 2020 that 36% of its management positions were held by women, compared to an average of 7% among all IATA members in the Asia Pacific region. Women hold seats on the airline's board of directors and manage key departments, including ground operations, commercial, finance, human resources and administration, engineering, flight operations, catering, and airports. When announcing these figures, Derek Nice reflected that "the majority of our employees are women, and they play key roles in every department and at every level in our airline. We're stronger for their leadership, dedication and commitment" (Air Vanuatu n.d.).

These statistics place Air Vanuatu alongside the only two other 25by2025 signatories in the region: Qantas and Air New Zealand. In mid-2020, women made up 37% of senior positions at Qantas, (Qantas n.d.a.) and the company has targets of 38% women in senior management by 2021 and 40% incoming women cadet pilots by 2028 (Qantas n.d.b.). Air New Zealand set a target for women in the senior leadership team to 50% by 2020 and now has gender balance in its executive (Air New Zealand n.d.).

Of IATA's 290 airline members, 59 had signed up for the initiative by December 2019 (Baldwin 2020). By signing up, the airlines have committed to annual reporting on key diversity metrics, increasing the number of women in senior roles and under-represented areas, increasing female nominations from their airline for IATA governance roles to at least 25%, and working with IATA to increase the number of women appointed to IATA governance roles to a minimum of 25%. The initiative was developed in recognition of the benefits of having women in leadership roles, and in response to the extent that women are underrepresented in aviation, with women comprising just 3% of airline CEOs (IATA 2018) and 5% of pilots (IATA n.d.a.). The IATA initiative is a successful example of a sector-based approach to increase diversity and the role industry associations can play in setting standards for their sector.

The 25by2025 initiative has continued to build momentum, despite the extreme challenges the airline industry is facing due to the global coronavirus disease pandemic. 2020 was the worst year in history for air travel demand, with considerable decreases in demand from international (75.6% below 2019) and domestic passengers (48.8% below 2019) (IATA 2018). In March 2021, Jane Hoskisson, IATA's Director for Talent, Learning, Engagement, and Diversity, acknowledged the role a diverse workforce will play in driving the industry's recovery and the opportunity the pandemic provided "for aviation to build back better with diversity at its core." She also stated that "IATA's 25by2025 is more than merely getting women at the top table. It is about collaboration to get more talent in the industry. It is about raising the bar for everybody. The industry recovery will be stronger if diversity is embedded across the aviation value chain" (IATA 2021).

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the regional average, the proportion of women in CFO/COO roles falls below it.

Industry associations drive women's representation on boards in Vanuatu.

Although 18% of directors in Vanuatu are women, these figures are driven by the high level of representation of women on industry association boards (38%) (Table O.4). Women comprised just 9% of directors on the seven SOE boards included in the sample and 14% of directors of other private sector organizations.

Interestingly, two out of the three women directors on Vanuatu's state-owned enterprise boards also hold senior roles, as chair of the Vanuatu Agriculture Development Bank and deputy chair of the National Housing Corporation.

The high level of women's leadership in Vanuatu's industry associations may point to broader leadership in the private sector.

Women comprise 6 of 15 directors of the Vanuatu Chamber of Commerce and Industry and one-third of directors of the Vanuatu Hotels and Resorts Association—both organizations where members are elected by their peers. The high number

of women on these boards points to their impact in those industries and suggests that women may play key roles in organizations not captured in this sample.

Vanuatu appears to have strong sectoral trends for women's representation in leadership.

Across the region, women are represented at higher rates in the tourism sector. This trend is also observed in Vanuatu, where women comprise 33% of director positions in tourism (Table O.5). A similar regional trend observed in the finance sector regionally is also apparent in Vanuatu. Women comprise 19% of directors and 20% of CEOs in Vanuatu's finance sector organizations. However, there are no women on the board of the Vanuatu National Provident Fund. Additionally, women were not represented as board chairs, directors, or CEOs in any of the country's media and communications or utilities organizations.

Table O.2: Women's Representation in Board Positions in Vanuatu

	Number of women	Number of men	Women (%)	Sample size	Regional average (% women)
Board chairs	1	12	8%	n =13	11%
Deputy chairs	1	3	25%	n = 4	19%
Directors	15	70	18%	n = 85	21%

n = number (sample size).
Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

Table O.3: Women's Representation in Senior Executive and Management Positions in Vanuatu

	Number of women	Number of men	Women (%)	Sample size	Regional average (% women)
CEO	2	11	15%	n = 13	13%
CFO/COO	1	6	14%	n = 7	34%
All senior management personnel (including CEOs and CFO/COOs)	30	50	38%	n = 80	29%

CEO = chief executive officer, CFO = chief financial officer, COO = chief operating officer, n = number (sample size).
Note: Senior management personnel includes executive leadership (CEOs, CFOs, COOs, and equivalent) and all staff designated manager, department head, or equivalent.
Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

Table O.4: Women's Representation in Leadership in Vanuatu by Organization Type

	Industry associations	Other private sector organizations	State-owned enterprises
Board Chairs	0% (n = 2)	0% (n = 4)	14% (n = 7)
Directors	38% (n = 21)	14% (n = 29)	9% (n = 35)
CEOs	100% (n = 1)	25% (n = 4)	0% (n = 8)

… = not available, CEO = chief executive officer, n = number (sample size).

Notes: Data are not reported by organization type for women's representation as deputy chairs, executives, or senior leadership personnel due to very small numbers. Although the study includes five categories of organization type, data are only available for three in the Vanuatu sample.

Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

Table O.5: Women's Representation in Leadership in Vanuatu by Sector

	Agriculture and fisheries	Finance	Media and communications	Tourism	Transport and infrastructure	Utilities	Unspecified
Board chairs	…	25% (n = 4)	0% (n = 2)	0% (n = 1)	0% (n = 2)	0% (n = 1)	0% (n = 3)
Directors	0% (n = 5)	19% (n = 21)	0% (n = 9)	33% (n = 6)	13% (n = 16)	0% (n = 2)	27% (n = 26)
CEOs	…	20% (n = 5)	0% (n = 1)	…	0% (n = 3)	0% (n = 2)	50% (n = 2)

… = not available, CEO = chief executive officer, n = number (sample size).

Notes: Data are not reported by sector for women's representation as deputy chairs, executives, or senior leadership personnel due to very small numbers. Organizations in the "unspecified" category include chambers of commerce and other peak bodies and state-owned enterprises that did not fit into the sectors identified, such as housing organizations; Although the study includes 12 sectors, data are only available for 7 in the Vanuatu sample.

Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, Leadership Matters dataset.

3. CONCLUSION

Women globally are underrepresented in business leadership. This study confirms that the Pacific is no different. Women in the Pacific face many of the same challenges and limitations found elsewhere, including lower workforce participation rates, fewer training and promotion opportunities, substantial caring responsibilities, and few protections against discrimination and harassment in the workplace.

However, the Pacific does vary from global trends in some important areas. Notably, the Pacific averages are higher than the global averages for women's representation as directors, board chairs, and CEOs. Still, the region faces some unique challenges, including the small size of the private sector. Although this limits the availability of leadership positions overall, it is particularly limiting for women, who must also manage cultural expectations regarding caring and domestic responsibilities and challenge social norms that see men as leaders.

The following conclusions are based on an analysis of the study's full dataset, collected from 274 organizations across 14 countries, and interviews with business leaders from across the region.

1. **Women in the Pacific are underrepresented in leadership roles in business against global targets, but there are pockets of progress.**

The 1990 United Nations resolution on women's leadership calls for a minimum representation of 30% women in all leadership roles including the private sector. Although this falls drastically short of parity, only a few Pacific Island countries have achieved a national average of 30% or above representation by women on boards or as chief executive officers. Regional data show that 73% of Pacific boards have less than 30% women directors and women comprise only 13% of CEOs. The Pacific regional averages are 21% for women directors and 11% for women board chairs, comparing favorably with the global averages of 17% women directors, 5.3% women board chairs, and 4.4% women CEOs.

The above-average representation of women in business leadership in the Pacific can partly be attributed to pockets of progress in particular countries, sectors, and organization types. Several countries have considerably higher levels of women in business leadership positions. Cook Islands, Palau, and Samoa all have an average of more than 30% women on boards. These same countries also had the highest representation by women as CEOs, along with Kiribati and Tuvalu. Similarly, the study found that some sectors had significantly higher rates of women in leadership than others. Notably, the tourism sector had the highest representation of women across all leadership levels, including CEO positions. Finally, industry associations are consistently leading the way in women's leadership compared to other organization types, including publicly listed companies and SOEs. Women are well represented across all leadership levels in industry associations, including having achieved greater than gender parity for CEO roles.

2. **Sustained increases in women's representation in business leadership roles will not occur without commitment and resourcing.**

Many of the organizations that have shown progress in increasing the representation of women have done so with strategic intent in the form of policy, resources, and strong support from high-level leadership. Some of the successful strategies noted in the case studies throughout this report include developing gender and diversity policies, setting targets for women's representation in leadership, creating leadership pathways for women, and promoting social norm change on women's work and leadership with staff and the wider community.[34]

All case study interviewees cited the strong backing of individuals in high-level leadership positions as critical to increasing women's leadership opportunities. In many cases, the drive to increase women's representation came from senior leadership. This high-level support enabled the effective implementation of strategies to increase women's representation in leadership and communicated to all staff the value of women's contributions and potential for leadership within the organization.

Interview subjects for the report's case studies also frequently cited that establishing an inclusive culture was essential to retaining and promoting women in their workforce. Successful strategies implemented by organizations profiled in the case studies included developing policies on sexual harassment and diversity, and showcasing women's contributions as workers and leaders, in addition to practical considerations, such as ensuring that facilities for women were available in male-dominated

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34   See boxes page 7, 19, 21, 24, 28, 33, 54, 66, 72, and 78.

workplaces. Leadership was also cited as a critical factor in setting the standards for acceptable behavior, including zero tolerance for discriminatory language or actions.

In recognition of the many additional barriers women face in the workplace, many of the organizations profiled in the case studies have also put in place measures to identify and support high potential women, such as establishing formal and informal networking and mentoring opportunities for women. Targeted training opportunities, designed to address the imbalance in opportunity faced by women, have also successfully encouraged and supported women to take on more senior roles.

Finally, several of the subjects interviewed for the case studies highlighted the point that strategies to increase women's representation in leadership could only be successful if combined with workplace policies and practices that recognize and accommodate the additional caring responsibilities that most women carry. Organizations addressed this in several ways, including flexible workplace policies, enhanced maternity leave provisions, and childcare support.

3. **The lack of reliable data makes it difficult to develop a comprehensive picture of women's representation in business leadership and the trends, drivers, and challenges over time.**

A lack of reliable sex-disaggregated data is a common issue across the Pacific. Therefore, it is unsurprising that this study also identified substantial data gaps for businesses. Very few businesses routinely report on the composition of their workforce, including senior management and board positions by gender or other diversity metrics. Based on publicly available reports and data, it is unclear if sex-disaggregated data is collected and analyzed internally. However, without targeted efforts to track the representation of women within organizations at all levels, progress is more difficult.

Even where sex-disaggregated workforce and leadership data is available, it is often not tracked over time, nor is there analysis by job category, seniority, or board appointments. Organizations that track and analyze data can better identify where women are underrepresented and put in place strategies to address the barriers that cause this underrepresentation. The gender portal established by the Pacific Power Association provides a good example of a sectoral approach to measuring women's representation. The gender portal publishes data on the representation of women at all levels and across technical and non-technical roles to create a regional average for the energy sector.

There is also a gap in the availability of data tracking the number of individual women holding multiple board seats. A Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (2012) study on women on the boards of SOEs also identified this issue. However, it has yet to be addressed systematically. Not knowing how many women sit on multiple boards can skew the data on women's representation, making it appear that many women hold these positions when—in reality—a small number of individual women hold multiple director positions. Further, due to the small size of the private sector in the Pacific, some countries and sectors may appear to have a high representation of women in business leadership but, due to the small overall numbers, these proportions may actually reflect single or very small numbers of women and, when tracked over time, the level of representation is not sustained when these individual women move on.

Without reliable data, governments, civil society, and other private sector organizations, such as chambers of commerce, are limited in their ability to advocate for and develop policy and programming to increase women's representation in business leadership.

4. **Businesses can make rapid progress in promoting women's leadership, and many have.**

Compared with the stubbornly low levels of women in politics in the Pacific, businesses show that change can happen quickly, even when operating within the same social and cultural norms. Drivers of change differ between the private sector and the political sphere, as does the capacity to introduce new ideas and reform strategies.

Businesses are much more agile, responding to frequent changes in markets. The example offered by publicly listed companies in Fiji demonstrates the speed at which the private sector can increase the representation of women. Following the introduction of gender diversity policy requirements to the South Pacific Stock Exchange listing rules, the proportion of women directors increased by 39% since 2019, and women now hold 25% of all director positions.

The factors that motivate organizations to make change also vary. They can be externally driven by national policy or through rules-based requirements, as with publicly listed companies in Fiji, or internally driven by senior leaders and others who value women's contribution in the workforce and lobby for change. The small size of the Pacific increases the power of determined individuals to drive change, as demonstrated by several organizations and individuals profiled for the case studies in this report.

Finally, although the Pacific compares well with global averages for women's business leadership, these averages reflect ongoing global inequality. In the Pacific and globally, the ultimate goal must be equality in leadership in all countries and sectors. Continued efforts towards equal representation in leadership are critical, not only for gender equality but also for continued economic growth.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

This section provides recommendations for relevant stakeholders to encourage and support women's leadership within the private sector. Many of these recommendations are not new—they have been proposed in previous reports and are aligned with regional and national gender equality frameworks and commitments. However, they remain relevant to progressing women's leadership in the private sector and SOEs. As economies emerge from the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, harnessing the clear benefits that come with increasing women's economic participation and leadership is more critical than ever to help drive economic recovery and growth.

Although this study focuses on gender diversity in leadership, the recommendations outlined could also support broader diversity and inclusion measures for leadership and decision-making roles, including for people with disabilities and the LGBTQI community.[35]

Recommendations are grouped by stakeholder. However, effective collaboration across stakeholder groups will be necessary to successfully increase women's leadership in business and other domains.

Governments

The employment, procurement, policy, and legislative decisions of governments can support or constrain women's economic empowerment. To ensure these decisions support gender equality at all levels, with a focus on increasing women's leadership in business, Pacific governments should:

1. Action commitments made through global and regional forums, including the 14th Triennial Conference of Pacific Women in 2021, to enhance collaboration between government and private sector and, as a key component of economic recovery plans, to strengthen leadership pathways for women. The achievement of these commitments requires actions, such as:
   o developing time-bound action plans with targets and accountability mechanisms, and
   o dedicating to relevant stakeholders the resources needed to achieve targets.
2. Increase women's workforce participation and opportunities for business leadership through legislative and policy reforms and budgetary and procurement processes. This could include:
   o identifying and addressing discriminatory provisions in employment legislation that constrain women's participation in the workforce and/or in specific sectors,
   o ensuring that legislative requirements including those regarding maternity leave and sexual harassment extend to the private sector, and
   o revising government procurement processes to engage women-owned, women-led, or businesses with over 30% women in senior management as vendors.
3. Adopt quotas or targets for gender diversity in state-owned enterprise leadership and implement skills-based and transparent director appointment processes.
4. Support improved data collection, analysis and reporting on women's private sector leadership through national statistics offices to inform policy and programming.
5. Facilitate national dialogue and/or coordination between stakeholders to encourage closer collaboration between the private sector and organizations working in other domains of women's leadership to share effective strategies to promote women's leadership in the Pacific.

Private sector organizations and networks

Private sector organizations, such as chambers of commerce and women's business networks, can support the increased representation of women in business leadership through:

1. Identifying and training women candidates and supporting their recruitment to board positions. Support could include:
   o maintaining a database of women interested and available for board vacancies that businesses can access,
   o circulating board opportunities to women on the database,
   o conducting information sessions and training for women interested in board positions, and
   o facilitating support networks of emerging and experienced business leaders.
2. Advocating to members, government, and the broader community the benefits of women's representation in leadership for organizational performance and strategies

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35   Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex.

to address the barriers and constraints that limit women's leadership opportunities. This work could include:

o establishing systems to collect gender diversity data for businesses and producing an annual, country-level report on gender diversity in business; and

o developing guidance on strategies to support women's leadership, including supportive recruitment and promotion practices, flexible work policies, gender pay gap analysis, inclusive organizational workplace culture, and methods for monitoring gender diversity and its impact on organizational performance.

Businesses

Individual businesses can also take action to increase women's leadership, such as:

1. Tracking and reporting sex-disaggregated data on workforce and board composition, and using this information to develop strategies for enhancing women's leadership opportunities. Strategies could include:

o establishing baselines and targets for women's representation, and implementing strategies to achieve targets and measure progress, such as including progress towards gender equality targets in the performance appraisals of senior managers;

o identifying and addressing barriers to women's leadership, including recruitment and board appointment, retention, and promotion policies and processes;

o creating networks and support systems within or across organizations to nurture women's leadership, including identifying and cultivating emerging women leaders;

o showcasing women in leadership and tracking the impact of having more women in leadership on the organization on staff retention, productivity, and performance.

2. Allocating resources and expertise to support the implementation of gender diversity strategies. Depending on the organization's size, this support could be provided in-house or through partnerships with other local organizations, such as chambers of commerce, institutes of company directors, women's business councils, and other networks. Resources should be focused on targeting, training, and supporting women leaders.

3. Developing opportunities and initiatives for emerging women leaders to gain exposure and experience in corporate governance and senior management. These could include board observer and/or junior director roles or talent identification programs that provide mentoring and training to high potential staff members.

Development partners and civil society organizations

Development partners and civil society organizations are important drivers of progress towards more equal communities. They can support the increased representation of women in business leadership through:

1. Embedding requirements to improve women's representation in leadership in funding and programming decisions (development partners);

2. Providing opportunities for women to access leadership training and mentoring (development partners and civil society organizations),

3. Developing and/or enhancing strategies to support women's leadership within their organizations, such as encouraging women to take on leadership roles, including on boards, and sharing lessons learned with other stakeholders (development partners and civil society organizations); and

4. Holding governments accountable for commitments to promote women's leadership by encouraging regular reporting on progress and providing support to monitor and implement women's leadership initiatives (civil society organizations).

Further research

While this study presents a snapshot of women's leadership in business across the Pacific, further research is needed to deepen understanding of the issues and challenges that constrain women's representation in business leadership and the opportunities to address them. Such research could examine country-specific barriers and opportunities and further identify how women's business leadership connects to women's leadership in other domains. Key opportunities for further research are:

1. A follow-up *Leadership Matters* study, tracking Pacific regional changes and trends, ideally with an expanded data set and sample. The follow-up study could specifically consider the role of directors in small island contexts, the number of unique people available, and how potential conflicts of interest from multiple board roles and other relationships are managed.

2. An investigation of the experience of women pioneers in business leadership in the Pacific and a regional survey of women in the private sector to better understand their motivation and willingness to take on leadership roles.

3. An examination of the country-specific barriers, constraints, and enabling environment factors that influence women's private sector leadership in the Pacific, including an analysis of the links between business leadership and social and cultural norms and its intersection with customary, civil society, and political leadership.

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APPENDIX: METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATIONS

The 2021 *Leadership Matters: Benchmarking women's business leadership in the Pacific* study measures women's representation in business leadership roles in the Pacific. This data is intended to provide baseline information about women's representation as board directors, board chairs, chief executive officers (CEOs), and senior management personnel.

Organizations covered

The study seeks to document women's leadership in business in the Pacific. This includes the number and proportion of women as board directors, board chairs, CEOs, and senior management personnel of industry associations, publicly listed companies, and other private sector organizations, such as provident funds, superannuation funds, non-listed companies, and state-owned enterprises (SOEs). Government-owned and controlled, SOEs are included in the study as they are among the largest commercial entities in most Pacific island countries, and for their importance as employers. Similarly, regulatory institutions, such as central banks, are included because of their significant role in setting the frameworks for business.

All businesses that are registered on companies' registries are required to nominate directors. However, the study focus was restricted to organizations with multiple directors and a formal governance function. This decision aligns with the definition of boards as a group of individuals responsible for the governance, management, and strategic direction of an organization (Australian Institute of Company Directors 2016).

The private sector in the Pacific includes some multinational organizations with global boards or boards based in places such as Australia, New Zealand, or the United States. However, to document the extent of local opportunities for Pacific women, the study is focused on organizations with a board operating in the Pacific.

The important role of family-run businesses and informal business activity for Pacific economies and women's economic empowerment is acknowledged. However, family-owned businesses and business activity in the informal sector are not included in this study.

Development of sample

The Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative (PSDI) compiled a list of 309 business organizations in the 14 Pacific developing member countries of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) (Table A1.1) through a desk-based review of publicly

available information. The data also include regional private sector organizations.

Table A1.1: Number of Organizations in the Study Sample by Country

	Number of organizations in sample
Regional private sector organizations	13
Cook Islands	13
Fiji	52
Federated States of Micronesia	14
Kiribati	17
Nauru	10
Niue	10
Palau	8
Papua New Guinea	52
Republic of the Marshall Islands	13
Samoa	24
Solomon Islands	31
Tonga	19
Tuvalu	11
Vanuatu	22

Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative. Data were not available for all of the organizations of interest.

Data collection and verification

Table A1.2 summarizes the data points collected for each organization.

Initial data collection was via an online survey designed to capture the data of interest summarized above and distributed digitally to approximately 110 organizations. 28 responses were received. Due to the low response rates, the initial methodology was adapted and augmented with a desk-based review. This research also identified other organizations which met our inclusion criteria.

Key data sources included legislation, company webpages, organizational charts, annual reports, LinkedIn, Facebook, and news media. PSDI used multiple sources to maximize

Table A1.2: Data Points Included in the Study Sample

Organization details	- Country - Organization name - Organization type (industry association, publicly listed company, state-owned enterprise, or other private sector organization) - Sector
Board composition	- Total number of board members - Number of board members who are men, number of board members who are women, and number of vacant board seats - Gender of board chair - Gender of deputy chair - Director remuneration (remunerated/voluntary) - Appointment process - Term
Senior management composition	- Size of management team - Number of men in management, number of women in management, number of vacant management roles - Gender of chief executive officer - Gender of chief financial officer/chief operating officer
Workforce composition	- Number of employees, number of employees who are men, and number of employees who are women

Source: Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative.

data coverage and triangulate findings. Where there was conflicting data, the most recent data source was used. PSDI documented the date of data collection and the date of the source of information. This data is available on request. PSDI validated the sample and the data collected with ADB's Pacific country offices, who reached out to relevant ministries and organizations to confirm the information was current and accurate. Relevant PSDI experts also validated the data.

Of the initial sample of 309 organizations, PSDI was able to collect partial or complete board data and/or senior management data for 274 organizations.

Notes on analysis.

Where boards have a range of possible sizes, the most recently available number of board members is used for the size of board data point. Where the breakdown of membership is not available, the mid-point is used.

The sum is used as a basis for calculating women's representation. The proportion of women on the board is based on the total number of men and women directors. Vacant seats are excluded.

Staff numbers refer to people. The data do not allow capture of full-time or part-time arrangements. Individuals in acting roles are captured in the data set.

This report presents data on a range of categories that have different titles in different countries. A list of key definitions for the various categories used in the report and the alternative titles that are used in some countries and/or organizations can be found on page viii.

The data presented throughout this report is based on available data and, therefore, has some limitations that are acknowledged by the authors. The data presented for the various leadership positions only pertains to filled positions – vacant positions are not included in the sample totals for boards and senior management positions.

Study limitations.

The sample is not necessarily representative.

The list of organizations was developed iteratively and is not necessarily representative of all businesses in the Pacific. Assessments on whether organizations met the inclusion criteria were made using publicly available information. It is plausible that organizations exist that would meet the

inclusion criteria that desk-based research and consultation did not uncover. The data that would be required to develop a robust, statistically representative sampling frame is not readily available.

Data completeness and accuracy.

Efforts were made to collect the most recent information possible. However, any errors in publicly available information may also have been reflected in the dataset compiled for this study. Changes in organizational leadership and management are ongoing, and the dataset represents a snapshot of women's leadership in 2021. Work to validate the list of organizations and data with country offices was undertaken to maximize the accuracy of the dataset.

Application of a binary approach to gender.

The data set applies a binary approach to gender. The authors acknowledge that this binary approach to gender does not reflect all people's experiences or identities. Gender is one dimension of identity. Future work to understand leadership in the Pacific should also consider the intersectionality between gender, nationality, religion, age, and other characteristics.

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LEADERSHIP MATTERS
BENCHMARKING WOMEN IN BUSINESS
LEADERSHIP IN THE PACIFIC

Women are underrepresented in business leadership globally, negatively impacting company performance and perpetuating gender inequalities. *Leadership Matters: Benchmarking Women in Business Leadership in the Pacific* collects and analyzes data on women's representation on boards and in senior management in the 14 Pacific developing member countries of the Asian Development Bank and finds that the Pacific compares favorably with global averages for women's representation on boards and in senior executive leadership.

About PSDI

PSDI is a technical assistance program undertaken in partnership with the Government of Australia, the Government of New Zealand, and the Asian Development Bank. PSDI supports ADB's 14 Pacific developing member countries to improve the enabling environment for business and to support inclusive, private-sector led economic growth. The support of the Australian and New Zealand governments and ADB has enabled PSDI to operate in the region for 15 years and assist with more than 300 reforms.

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PSDI
THE PACIFIC
PRIVATE SECTOR
DEVELOPMENT
INITIATIVE

A technical assistance program undertaken in partnership with the Asian Development Bank, the Government of Australia, and the Government of New Zealand.